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Just in time for Australian summer, a special 20-page look at our destination of the year.



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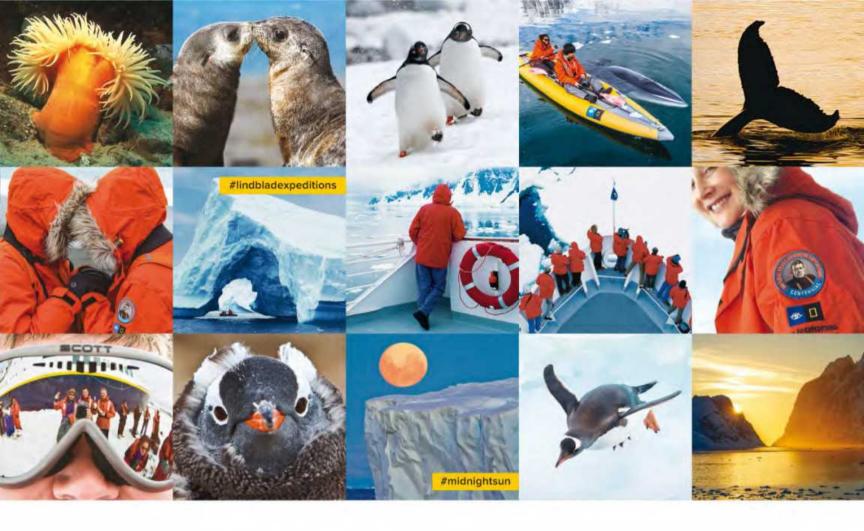




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Advice and mediation for the sometimes unavoidable trials of travel. Got a problem? E-mail us at ombudsman @cntraveler.com.



David Prior CONTRIBUTING EDITOR Reporter on "Australia 2016," page 90 Restaurant table worth

requesting? "A seat at Sean's Panaroma on Bondi Beach in Sydney. Go for a late Sunday lunch after a surf." Best room service meal of your life? "During New York's polar vortex, I checked into The NoMad and ordered room service for two days, inviting my best friends over for burgers with rosemary fries. Heaven." Where are you going next? "I'm planning a 49-day journey between Alexandria and





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34 Hotel as Muse Paris's legendary Les
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Addis Ababa."

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Anna Winger WRITER

"Under the Volcanoes," page 80 Favorite hotel? "Bleiche Resort & Spa in the Spree Forest, outside Berlin. It has the most wonderful pools and saunas." Top destination on your must-visit list? "I'd love to go to Lapland on a dog safari and to see the Northern Lights." I would stalk the housekeeping cart for... "Shower caps for my kids. They find them hilarious." The airplane of my dreams would have... "All the great TV shows like Fargo and a Danish series called The Legacy that I never have time to catch up on."







Black Book Read René Redzepi's and other tastemakers' Sydney picks at cntraveler.com/australia.



Out in the World Skiers head to Japan; Seoul's new culture hub.



46 Essay Media mogul Tom Freston on his long love affair with India.





57 The Gold List From design you want to steal to the greatest spaghetti on earth (in England, no less), plenty keeps us returning to the 142 hotels on our annual list.



Don't Miss See One King's Lane's Pinterest board, inspired by our Australia feature, at pinterest.com/cntraveler.



114 Travel Intel Our experts tell us where to go in 2016, and more.

TALK TO US

Where are you going this year? E-mail your photos and tips to letters@ condenasttraveler.com.



Souvenir A vintage keepsake that comes in handy at happy hour.



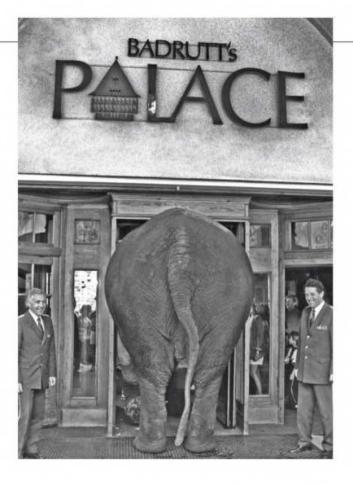
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True story: In the 1990s, a guest at Badrutt's Palace Hotel in St. Moritz wanted to surprise his wife for their anniversary with something "unbelievable." The hotel concierge arranged for an hour-long visit with an elephant.



Where Nothing Is Impossible

I HAPPENED to see the rivulet splinter in two as it jumped over the marble threshold of the bathroom and onto the herringbone parquet floor. The water was headed toward a perfectly frayed antique Oriental rug—the kind that had probably been there since the Grand Hotel des Bains first opened on the Lido in 1900—by the time I realized what was happening. My mother was going to take a "quick bath" before checkout, before we were supposed to pile into a water taxi to the Venice train station with an improbable Wes Anderson—esque tower of leather suitcases. Even though it was the 1980s, my mother traveled like it was the 1880s. To this day, there's still nothing quick about her bathing or travel rituals. One minute, she was in a robe, languorously parting individual mascara-clumped lashes with the point of a safety pin; the next, she was pacing frantically in nothing but knee-highs and stuttering in her native Italian on the phone with the front desk, as my older sister and I used silver ice buckets to bail the overflowing bathwater into the sink.

By the time a staff of three arrived with assorted mops and buckets in tow, we had managed, under the frenzied direction of our partially dressed mother, to sop up most of the three inches of water that had flooded the cavernous marble bathroom. While my sister and I, 17 and 14, respectively, would have unzipped our skin and crawled away if we could have, my mother demonstrated a near giddy sense of relief at the first sign of help.

With some apology but without, to my teenage mind, sufficient shame, she led the staff to the scene of the crime as though they were dinner guests. And in her characteristic—if unlikely—balance of genuine graciousness and entitlement, she offered the housekeepers water and chocolates and then proceeded to finish applying her eye makeup.

What stays with me about that day (besides my crimson-cheeked mortification) is the calm with which the staff handled the incident. Though the Des Bains has since been turned into residences, it's emblematic of a generation of grande dame hotels whose unflappability, grace, and invisibility—where appropriate—modeled a set of behaviors and a level of refinement and taste it hoped to attract in its clientele.

This year's Gold List (page 57)—the editors' annual selection of the properties doing it best-includes hotels as diverse as the historic Belmond Villa San Michele in Florence and the almost-new Alila Jabal Akhdar in Oman. But in our culling process, we kept coming back to this idea of hotel as arbiter-not just of those characteristics one ascribes to hospitality but also of culture more generally. Babylonstoren in South Africa has created a farm-to-table-to-bed fantasy that seems to dovetail with our collective urge to eat locally and beautifully. The luxury tented camp Longitude 131°, situated deep in the Red Centre in Australia's Northern Territory, seems to disappear into the sand dunes, always reflecting one thing we discerning travelers seek: primacy of place (see page 90 for our cover feature on Australia).

At its best, a world-class hotel asks as much of its guests as the guests do of it, inspiring visitors to be better versions of themselves long after they have left.

Drian Juni

Pilar Guzmán, Editor in Chief

💆 @pilar_guzman



From left: A lounge at Soho House Istanbul; on the shore near the Big Island's Pololu Valley.

Plan Now: Istanbul

New nonstop flights to Turkey's largest city make this spring a particularly good time to visit.

DO IT ON YOUR OWN

Istanbul's Hagia Sofia and Blue Mosque will be even easier to reach this May when Turkish Airlines launches its new nonstop flights from Atlanta, on the heels of its nine-monthold daily flight out of San Francisco. In March, April, and May (Istanbul's shoulder season), crowds are thinner than in the peak summer months, and temperatures hover at a mild 60 degrees. Whether you're visiting the Asian shore—known for its quiet green spaces, the historic Mihrimah Sultan mosque (which is open to visitors), and street markets selling Turkish antiques

and sweets-or the European side, where you'll find the majority of the tourist sights, including the Grand Bazaar, as well as emerging design districts like Fener and Balat, it's the smartest time to go. (The city's efficient ferries make it easy to get to both sides of the Bosphorus, and run every 20 minutes between Eminönü in the west and Kadıköy in the east.) The gorgeous Soho House Istanbul opened last spring in popular Beyoğlu on the European side. Or if you'd rather stay closer to the Blue Mosque and Topkapki Palace, opt for the Four Seasons Hotel

GET SOME HELP

While many travelers are comfortable planning their own Istanbul trip, logistics get more complicated outside the city. That's why we recommend booking a bigger itinerary with a specialist like Earl Starkey, who can coordinate private transfers between Istanbul and regions such as chic seaside Bodrum, and can arrange excursions like private museum tours or balloon rides over Cappadocia's Bronze Age dwellings. Starkey also scores free addons such as spa credits and room upgrades at properties, including the new House Hotel Cappadocia in Ortahisar.

For customized itineraries to Turkey and Hawaii, planned by travel specialists Earl Starkey and Susan Tanzman, respectively, visit editorsitinerary.cntraveler.com. The first ten readers to book will receive a ten percent discount. 18

percent of travelers to Hawaii in 2014 visited the Big Island.

Go Now: The Big Island

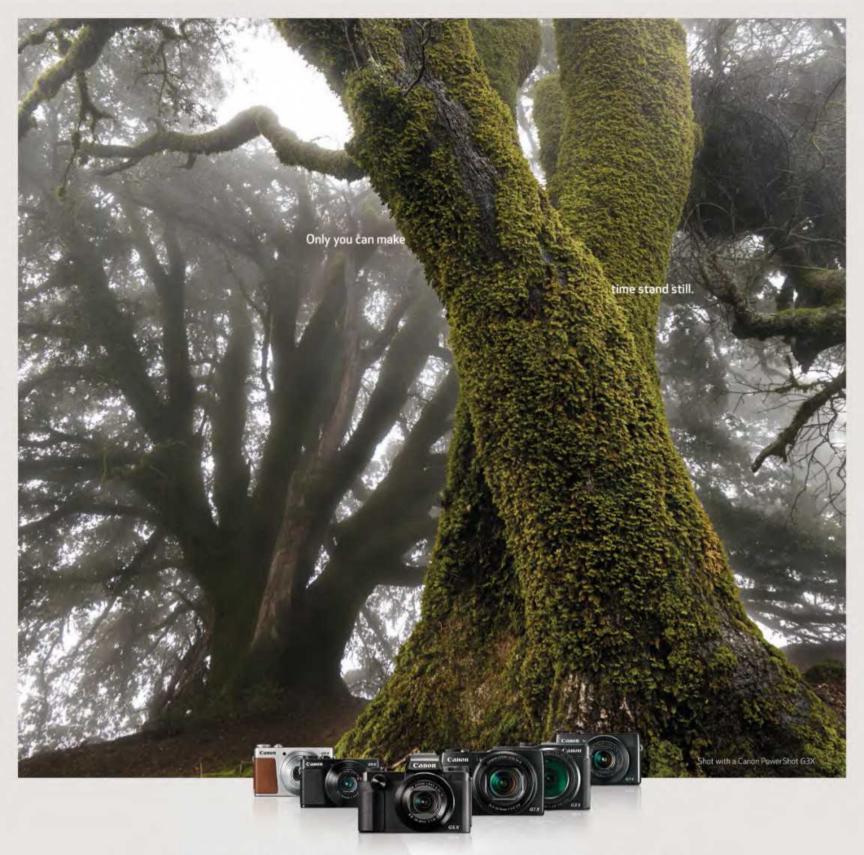
After New Year's Eve, prices plunge on Hawaii's most underrated isle.

DO IT ON YOUR OWN

Any time's a good time to visit Hawaii, but with Virgin America now flying to both Maui and Oahu from San Francisco, a dip in hotel room prices of up to 34 percent by mid-month, and consistently balmy temps, we say don't wait. Skip the beach-lazing masses on Waikiki and fly directly to Kona, or hop a 45-minute Hawaiian Air flight from Honolulu to the Big Island, a paradise for nature fiends, with black sand beaches (keep an eye out for green sea turtles), volcano hikes, and prime stargazing near the summit of Mauna Kea. Book a room at the art-filled Mauna Kea Beach Hotel and you'll be well positioned for days trekking the Pololu Valley and snorkeling Kealakekua Bay.

GET SOME HELP

With so many landscapes spread across 4,028 square miles, the Big Island can be trickier to navigate than the rest of the state. Call on the expertise of a travel specialist like Susan Tanzman to help get your trip right. You'll be directed to some of the island's most pristine spots, including the magnificent Akaka Falls, near Hilo (where she can arrange a zip-line ride through a waterfall). Tanzman often recommends off-the-radar hotels such as Kilauea Lodge, near Hawaii Volcanoes National Park; nighttime swimming excursions with manta rays off Kona Beach; and meet-and-greets with local painters at Waimea's excellent Saturday farmers' market.



Jennifer Wu is ready to capture the moment, no matter where her journey takes her. With relentless perseverance and the rugged, compact cameras in the PowerShot G Series, nothing stands between her and the image she wants—even heavy fog, dim lighting and a slippery mountain trail. It's that attitude that helps you take the art of travel photography to new heights.

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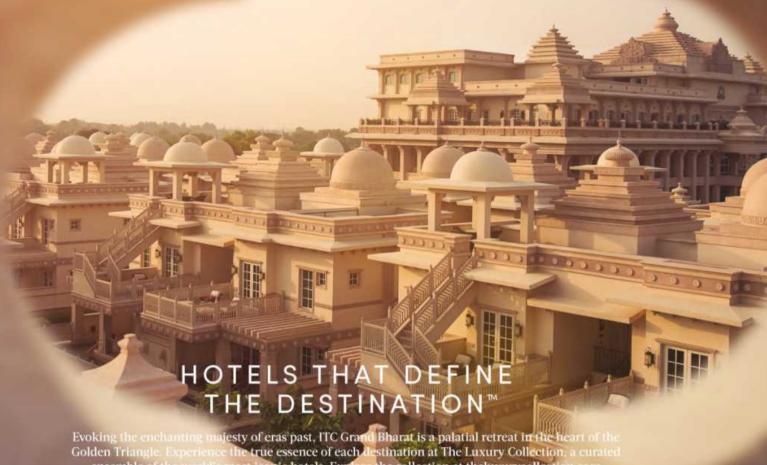
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Out in the World





JUST BACK FROM

Formentera, Spain

Fashion stylist Laura Ferrara escapes to this tiny Mediterranean island (usually in July) to do as little as possible. "Sometimes we don't leave the house until 2 p.m.," says Ferrara, who's rented a four-bedroom home with a guesthouse in Sant Ferran with two other families for the last two years. "We'll catch an octopus, roast it in the backyard, drink local wine, and play the guitar." They spend lazy afternoons swimming in secluded coves, or they'll head to their favorite white sand beaches, Playa de Ses Illetes, Playa Migjorn, and, for snorkeling, Es Calò. Though the island telegraphs breezy style, it's nothing like its flashier neighbor Ibiza. "No one's

getting dressed up," says Ferrara. Instead of heels, Ferrara, like everyone else on the island, wears handmade espadrilles from El Pilar de la Mola (a market open on Wednesday and Sunday afternoons) or leather sandals from Ishvara. And for those ubiquitous handwoven beach baskets with beautiful leather straps—of which Ferrara says she has "too many to count"—pop into a local hardware store (yes, you read that right).
-LAUREN DECARLO

A BRIEF GUIDE TO THE ISLAND

If you want to rent a house: Visit formentera luxuryvillas.com for homes that can accommodate up to 14 guests.

Or if you'd rather stay in a hotel: Talaya Formentera and Gecko Beach Club, on Playa Migjorn; the eco-chic Es Ram resort; and the Es Marès Hotel and Spa. Where to eat out: In Sant Franceso, Can Carlos and Ca Na Pepa for Italian; and in Sant Ferran, Can Dani, the island's only Michelin-starred restaurant.

How to get around: A car comes in handy on this 32-square-mile island if you want to beachhop or visit the Mercat Pagès (Farmers' Market). On her last trip, Ferrara rented a pink Méhari from

formenterameharis.com.

PASS IT ON

"Parfumerie Madini, on the avenue Pasteur in Tangier, has a huge assortment of essential oils. It can get crowded, but it's worth it for the neroli or rose soap, and the geranium oil in those little roll-on perfumes."

-Victoire de Taillac-Touhami, co-owner of the culty apothecary Buly 1803 in Paris



CLOOKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: PHOTOGRAPHS BY TY COLE; ALAN JENSEN; PHILIPPE MICHEL/ROBERT HARDING



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The Golden Hour

Nothing's more effortlessly stylish than a flash of metal against a tan wrist.

Clockwise from top: Audemars Piguet

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Master watch (rolex .com; \$24,950).











In Her Shoes

You might call Tabitha Simmons a wishful packer. "I'll find things I haven't worn in two years, then carry them halfway around the world and never put them on," says the London-born stylist turned shoe designer, who launched her eponymous line in 2009. So what did she wear on the journeys that took her to Portofino, Venice, the south of France, and the Hamptons this past year? "I love light, chiffony dresses, I always pack swimwear no matter where I'm going... and I tend to bring a lot of shoes." (Simmons isn't kidding-she often hauls an extra suitcase just for her footwear.) This tendency toward excess extends to her carry-on: She travels with

"loads of magazines" and is never without her Marshall headphones and her latest needlepoint project. ("I've been working on one covered in poppies that I plan to turn into a pillow," she says.) But on a recent trip to Big Sur with her husband and two sons, she took a minimalist approach. "We drove up the coast from L.A. and stayed at the Post Ranch Inn," she says. "The vibe there is so low-key, I lived in jeans, sunglasses, T-shirts, and hiking clothes." And that wishful packing? It finally paid off: "I always bring workout clothes and never wear them," Simmons admits. "This time I did." -JAYNA MALERI

)on't forget & Needlepoint 7 Dolce swimsuit





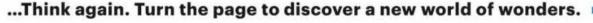


Clockwise from top right: Jennifer Meyer Nameplate Necklace (ylang23.com; \$1,150); Tabitha Simmons Dolly shoes and Beaded Pouch (tabithasimmons.com; \$395 and \$495); Dolce & Gabbana swimsuit (dolcegabbana.com; \$840).



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#1 Fiordland National Park, New Zealand

See the wonder with Princess on a 13-day New Zealand cruise.

Considering the epic range of its beauty, Fiordland National Park does not get as much global attention as one might expect, but for those who love the sea, it is a true jewel. Quite simply, it's one of the world's most beautiful spots. Established as a national park in 1952 and designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1990, the territory encompasses ice-carved fjords filled with pristine crystal blue water, deep lakes that seem almost prehistoric, spectacular snow-topped mountains that reach toward the sky, and sweeping vistas that stretch from the granite hills all the way down to the sea. It's no wonder the ethereal landscape is the location choice for imaginative cinematic productions.



#2 Panama Canal

See the wonder with Princess on a 15-day Panama Canal cruise.

Only when you see the Panama Canal in person do you really understand the magnitude of this wonder. And the true gift this monumental passageway gives to travelers is the opportunity to explore some of Central and South America's other fascinating sites—from manmade marvels to native cultures, old-world treasures, and breathtaking natural wonders.



#3 Shiretoko Peninsula, Japan

See the wonder with Princess on a 17-day Grand Japan with Toyohashi Fireworks Festival cruise.

Known as "the end of the earth," this remote region located on the northern tip of the island of Hokkaido is the ultimate example of Japan's natural beauty—and it is only accessible by foot or by ship. Brown bears roam the fir and oak forests, flocks of sea birds congregate on the isolated beaches, and the green-clad coastline looks primordial.



#4 Glacier Bay National Park, Alaska

See the wonder with Princess on a 7-day Voyage of the Glaciers cruise.

This expansive national park, bordering the U.S. and Canada, is one of the most biodiverse regions of the world. Created by glacial movement and colossal snowfall, the landscape-home to active glaciers, towering peaks, and a large network of caves-is truly breathtaking. Try to imagine all of this within one park: 130 lakes, more than 1,000 plant species, and countless animals like whales, moose, wolverines, mountain goats, and grizzly bears. The crown jewel of the park, Margerie Glacier, is a wonder in and of itself. The sight of an icy-blue glacier calving-with huge cracks, deep rumbles, and white thunder resounding through the clear sky and emphasizing the true potency of this natural phenomenon-stays in one's memory. Subtler but just as awe-inspiring is the wildlife, like seals relaxing on icebergs as they contentedly float by, not a care in the world after a meal of fresh Alaskan fish.



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Inside a Century-Old Jewelry House

At Van Cleef & Arpels's workshop in Paris, craftsmen spent three years painstakingly readying the brand's latest collection by hand.





"THE STONES seem to be held together by magic," says Van Cleef & Arpels president Nicolas Bos, describing the 110-year-old jewelry house's signature "mystery set." Grooves are cut into the backs of rubies, emeralds, and sapphires so they can slide, one by one, onto gold metal rails that then disappear completely. This technique, which only a dozen people in the world have mastered, was developed at Van Cleef & Arpels's workshop near the Place Vendôme in Paris and patented in 1933. It's here that, for the last three years, artisans have been making their latest collection-the Seven Seas, inspired in part by the ocean-themed tiara Van Cleef created for Princess Charlene of Monaco's 2011 wedding. In an age when wabi-sabi and an undone aesthetic are ubiquitously embraced, it's easy to forget that perfection achieved by hand demonstrates true artisanship. Never is that more evident than when staring at Van Cleef's stunning Bleu Absolu diamond and sapphire necklace, which took more than 2,000 hours to make and was worked on collectively by jewelers, stone-setters, lapidaries, and "the golden hands" (otherwise known as polishers). "The process requires extremely skilled people," says Bos. "But the craftsmen here aren't assemblymen-they are artists and creators." - LAUREN DECARLO

1. Jewelers and stone setters work on a nub of wood called a *cheville* (French for "ankle"). Each is shaped by its owner, depending on how they hold their tools and whether they're right- or left-handed. A jeweler who recently retired after 42 years was given his cheville as a memento, as is the tradition.

2. A sketch of the Bleu Absolu necklace, with five sapphire drops totaling 85.86 carats—the pear-shaped center diamond is 14.22 carats. "Going from a two-dimensional drawing to a three-dimensional piece is the hardest part of the process," says Van Cleef's Nicolas Bos.



BEFORE YOU BOOK

Most of Les Bains' 39 guest rooms and suites have private balconies, but be sure to ask for an executive suite if you want a claw-foot tub. To glimpse a bit of the hotel's history, note the black-and-white-checkered floor in the restaurant, which was inspired by the club's original Philippe Starck-designed dance floor.

Right: Pomellato Victoria earrings (pomellato.com; \$13,900); Fendi Studded Crystal Baguette (fendi .com; \$4,500); Altuzarra Aurelia dress (similar style available at Neiman Marcus; \$4,995); Dior Chromic sunglasses (Dior boutiques nationwide; \$515); Cartier Panthère de Cartier bracelet (800-227-8437; price upon request); Chanel Fine Jewelry "Médaillon Ultra" necklace (Chanel Fine Jewelry boutiques nationwide; \$132,000); Valentino Garavani Garden Party shoes (valentino.com; \$1,395).

INSPIRED BY

Les Bains, Paris

New York had Studio 54 and Paris had Les Bains Douches. The bathhouse turned nightclub opened in 1978, but its champagne-fueled parties would've broken the Internet, had it existed, with its reliably fabulous guest list: Warhol, Basquiat, Deneuve, and it couples past (Johnny Depp and Kate Moss) and present (David Bowie and Iman). Nearly four decades later, the club endures at the same address in the Marais—only now it's in a new luxury hotel of the same name. The dress code, however, still calls for something Iman and Kate would approve of. -LAUREN DECARLO



TOP LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH BY NICOLE FRANZEN FOR DESIGN HOTELS. STILL LIFES BY CHRIS GORMAN (7). STYLING BY PAUL PETZY

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An aerial view of Punta Preciosa, part of the Playa Grande Beach Club.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The Converted

A new beach club resort turns a D.R. critic into a believer.

I'D ONLY VISITED the Dominican Republic twice, but that's all it took for me to swear off an entire country. How could I possibly hate a place bounded by such cerulean waters? Easy. The hotels I stayed at were either enormous resorts catering to sunburned frat boys with free-drink wristbands or way too mom-and-pop (think two adults sharing a twin bed in a room off the owner's kitchen). Once, things got so bad that my husband and I drove to Haiti for a change of scenery.

Of course, it wasn't all terrible. There was an otherworldly ten-mile stretch of beach along the remote northern shore that had the best surf breaks in the country and dense stands of royal palms growing almost to the waterline. Sure enough, New York-based interior designer Celerie Kemble and money manager Boykin Curry saw the potential in this Edenic coastline. After persuading some of their famous friends—Charlie Rose, Mariska Hargitay—to go in on a 2,000-acre parcel of land, they built the **Playa Grande Beach Club**, an intimate nine-bungalow resort that

opened in November. Perhaps, I thought, that old third-time adage would prevail.

The moment I stepped inside the hotel's light-filled clubhouse (which doubles as lobby, bar, and dining room), I was handed an ice-cold mojito. Shuttered doors leading to a sweeping wraparound porch were thrown open, dissolving any boundaries between indoors and out. I wandered the property, sipping a second mojito while coveting the high-back wicker chairs, ikat pillows and throws, and pink and green tile floors—all assembled in Kemble's high-WASP style that's best described as Palm Beach by way of Bali.

Most of the furniture and light fixtures are made on the island, and the architecture faithfully references the D.R.'s lacy Victorian-era gingerbread buildings with their lattice woodwork and pastel doors. But these aren't the only elements that ground the place in the Dominican Republic: Nearly all the staff are from nearby towns (some are enrolled in a resort-funded literacy program). And though the restaurant has exactly the kind of food you want to eat in 85-degree weather (poached eggs and avocado on multigrain toast, granola and homemade yogurt with local honey), you merely have to walk to the beach for a more authentic Dominican meal. Here, you'll find a marketplace that the owners spent \$2 million building for the food and crafts vendors who'd operated on the beach for decades.

As I sat by the sea, washing down tostones with a frosty Presidente from one of the vendors, I thought about how a great hotel can change the way you see an entire country. But I didn't philosophize long. I was too busy thinking about when I could feasibly get back here.

-REBECCA MISNER

Tip Sheet

HOW TO GET THERE

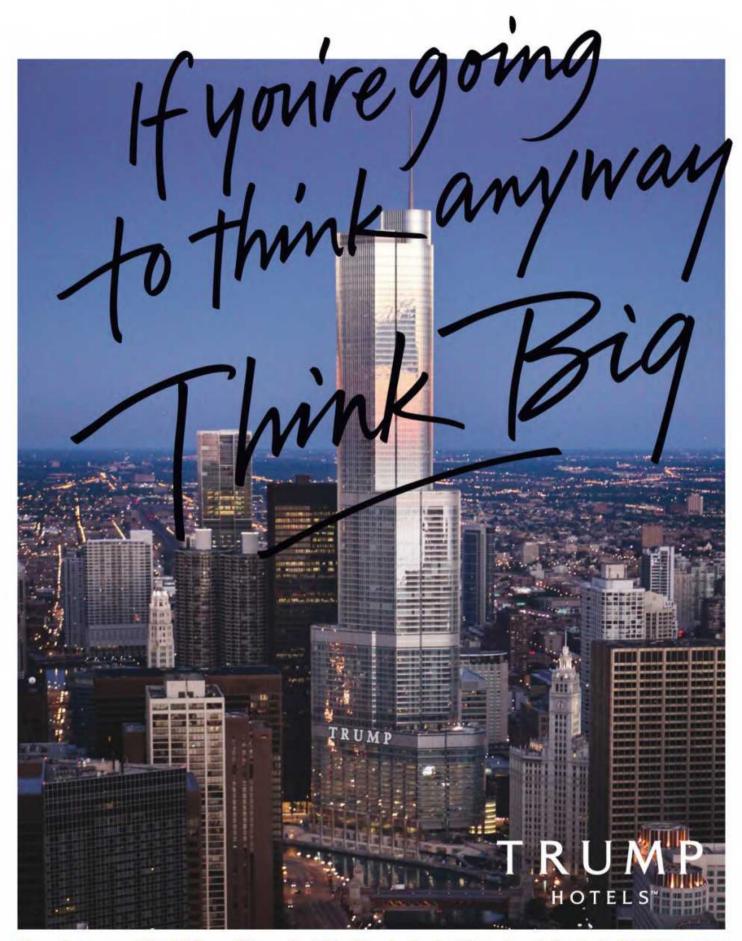
Fly into Puerto Plata's small Gregorio Luperón International (JetBlue has daily nonstops from New York). The Playa Grande Beach Club can arrange for a taxi to pick you up for the hour-and-20-minute drive to the resort.

THE DAY-TRIP TO TAKE

If you do pry yourself away from the resort's gorgeous tree-lined beach, we suggest heading to Laguna Gri-Gri, in the nearby town of Rio San Juan (a tenminute taxi ride away). Here, you can hire a boat and a guide to ferry you through the mangrove-dense lagoon and out into the open ocean. Bring a snorkel and a mask-the guide will stop at yellowcoral reefs if you ask.

HEAD OUT FOR DINNER

For excellent Dominican food, check out El Babunuco Bar and Restaurant, in the nearby town of Cabrera. Order the lobster and the *pulpo creole* (octopus in a spicy tomato sauce). And be sure to try Mama Juana—rum, red wine, and honey infused with herbs and tree bark.



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SEATTLE

Local Hero

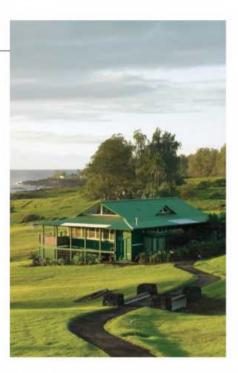
At last, a great place to stay that suits this rugged city: a refurbished 107-year-old classic.

Below: The Sorrento's mahogany-paneled Fireside Room. Right: An ocean bungalow at Travaasa Hana. Where to sleep in Seattle? The Sorrento Hotel—at a safe remove from the tourist bustle of Pike Place but with killer views of Puget Sound-might finally settle this dilemma. Its mahogany walls, wool velvet couches, and roaring fire call to mind a century-old Northwestern clubhouse, offering what so many other hotels here don't: Seattleness. We're not exactly the first to notice—the place has emanated clannish cool since its first guest, then-president William Howard Taft, squeezed through the doors in 1909; local gal Alice B. Toklas frequented the bar. But the hotel's recent \$1 million face-lift brought back just the right amount of nostalgic luster: recovered white oak floorboards, framed old Thanksgiving menus, and vintage bar stools gussied up with rose velvet saddles in the storied Dunbar Room. There's no proof that Toklas and Gertrude Stein sipped their whiskeys from these very perches when passing through from Paris, but barkeep Scott Hadley's new spirits-heavy cocktail list makes them the hottest seat in town. - ERIN FLORIO



IF YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT THE CARIBBEAN...

On Mexico's **Riviera Maya**, a mid-century-inflected Thompson hotel is now the grown-up go-to in downtown Playa del Carmen, and its waterfront Beach House (with 27 suites) is on its way too. • Zemi Beach House opens soon as the first resort in **Anguilla**'s remote East End, known for secluded villas and powder beaches. Here, float between whitewashed villas and a spa in a reconstructed Thai home. • This spring, Eleven Experience comes to **Harbour Island** with the Bahama House Inn, whose two cottages share outdoor space and a saltwater pool. Even clubbier? A private atoll hideaway, reserved for guests, is under way. • Colombian fashion designer Silvia Toherassi unveils a big-sister property and spa around the corner from her tiny, eponymous **Cartagena** hotel; fellow Colombian Richard Mishaan designed the book-lined lobby and airy restaurant, as well as its 42 clean-lined rooms and rooftop pool. -ANDREW SESSA



HAWAII

Super Natural

Travaasa Hana, on Maui's remote eastern shore, has just undergone a \$12 million renovation, but the good news is that I could barely tell. Beloved for its splendid isolation and beauty. the former Hotel Hana-Maui has been in operation since 1946, long before the famously treacherous road to Hana was paved; habitués worried that under new ownership the property might lose its subtle and off-thecuff elegance. Happily, the ocean bungalows are still free of clocks and televisions—and with the addition of handsome wooden ceiling fans, the same castaway feeling remains. It was tempting to just stay on my lanai and look out over the Pacific, which, against the black lava rock, glows a mesmerizing cobalt blue I've seen only here. But doing so would have meant missing the serene saltwater pool, the hammocks strung between skinny palms—and, above all, the people who make the place run, and who treated me not with the generic deference of touch-screen hotels elsewhere but with sincere and casual warmth. Nearly all of them live locally, and the resort is set on 70 acres in the middle of town, so to be a guest here is to be immersed in its life. One morning as I crossed a quiet street, I saw the spire of Wananalua Church. I walked up the road and stood outside, listening to the congregation sing psalms in Hawaiian, and I felt, for a little while, part of this place. -ALEXANDER MAKSIK



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The Hotel Breakfast

PASTRIES

The croissants are made daily, but it's the tebirkes— a layered pastry coated in poppy seeds and filled with a sugar-marzipan paste—and spandauer, or, as we know it, Danish, that stay with you.

COFFEE

The French press selection features roasters using single-origin beans. This one's from Italy's Caffè River.

KOLDT BORD

Pile slices of salami and turkey with rullepølse, a rolled sausage, atop the dense rugbrød (rye bread) and knækbrød (crackers).

FRESH-PRESSED JUICE

Expect flavorpacked combos like ginger-lemonade-apple, cherry-clove, and beetroot-carrot-apple.

FISH

If it swims, it could make it onto a Danish breakfast plate. The stars offered here are fjord-sourced shrimp, hay-smoked salmon, and pungent housepickled herring.



The 260-year-old grande dame does a mean Danish *morgenmad* of fish, cured meats, and bread, served with views of King's New Square.





Skiing in Japan

How to navigate the emerging winter mecca.

For the past decade, Japan has been gaining traction with America's snow obsessives. No wonder, with the dollar trouncing the yen and a maritime climate that drops insanely good powder for a full five months. The best conditions are on the northernmost island of Hokkaido, which gets 600 inches of snowfall annually, nearly twice that of Vail. Families love Rusutsu, in southern Hokkaido, for its gentle slopes. Niseko is the kingpin of Asian ski mountains thanks to its 30-mile network of trails, while experts swarm Mount Tokachi for its alpine bowls. Plus, there's steaming ramen for lunch and soothing hot springs once the boots come off. Here's what to know.

PREPARE FOR A LONG DAY

With just ten days of vacation a year, the Japanese hit the slopes hard. Ski well after sunset at Niseko's Grand Hirafu resort, which runs select lifts until 8:30 p.m.

BRING CASH

Stock up on yen at the airport. While credit cards might get you a lift ticket, expect lots of cash-only amenities.

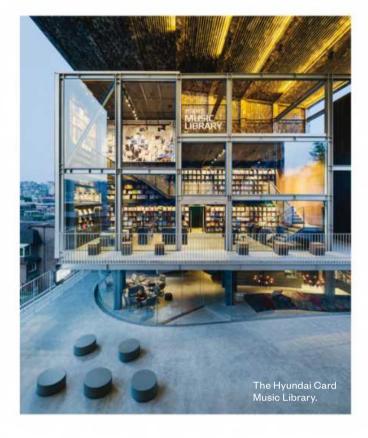
DO BETTER THAN A HOT TUB

Yes, there are mega-lodges like the Rusutsu Resort, but if you want authentic, opt for an *onsen* (hot springs) resort. We like Ryounkaku, which has incredible views on the top of Mount Tokachi.

RENT A CAR

Mountain shuttles connect many of the resorts, but Hokkaido's strong northerlies often shut these down. Niseko Auto has a stash of 4WDs and English GPS rental, with cars available at New Chitose Airport. - KADE KRICHKO





HIT LIST

Art and Seoul

The Korean capital's embassy-lined **Hannam** neighborhood has always thrown off an international vibe. Now, with a new music performance space and an influx of food and shopping hot spots, it's emerging as an epicenter for Korea's zeitgeist.

1. The Hyundai Card Music Library houses 10,000 vinyl records from the '50s on, including limited-edition Rolling Stones albums and the Beatles' 1966 Yesterday and Today, whose graphic original cover was recalled by Capitol Records after public outcry. Catch a Korean indie band in the Understage space.

2. The 40-seat bar Wolhyang pours small-batch *makgeolli*, a traditional rice liquor available in fruity flavors. Containing live cultures, the milky malt lasts just a week or two, so you can only sample it while here.

4. Yurt Studio, run by a husband-and-wife design team, crafts limited-edition leather shoes and bags, including its signature pastry-shaped clutch, the Croissant Bag.

3. In a mint green-tiled space resembling a bathhouse, the busy ovens at On Ne Sait Jamais turn out Han River meets Left Bank sweets like *macaron* cake. And Itaewon-ro, Hannam's liveliest shopping drag, is right nearby.

5. The crowded Korean lunch table goes minimalist at **Parc**, whose menu draws from recipes of co-owner Pak Mogua's mother—both classic (steamed pork with fresh kimchi) and off-kilter (anchovies pan-fried with almonds).

6. Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, helped to launch Hannam's renewal when it opened more than a decade ago; it remains the city's preeminent contemporary-art stop, with Warhols and Rothkos, plus homegrown talent like sculptor Do Ho Suh. -CHANEY KWAK

THE QUESTION

"WHAT BUILDING ARE YOU DYING TO VISIT?"

We asked three top architects.

Daniel Libeskind,

whose Sapphire residential building in Berlin will be completed in 2016: "The Kaaba in Mecca, an amazing form that represents a revelatory idea and is one of the most fascinating urban experiences in the world. A circular space for pilgrims surrounds its historic cubic structure, and, as such, it represents one of the great mystical architectural forms—like the Pyramids, like all great religious edifices."

Ada Tolla, whose mixed-use Drivelines Studios in Johannesburg opens in 2016: "Johannesburg's Ponte Tower, a cylindrical residential building with a billboard on top. Like many 1970s big-idea buildings, it imploded: The neighborhood went downhill, and trash filled the courtyard. But it has amazing bones, and there are now real propositions for reutilizing it."

David Rockwell, whose NeueHouse Hollywood, a workspace in L.A.'s landmark CBS Radio Building, opened this fall: "The Glasgow School of Art in Scotland. It's a legendary Charles Rennie Mackintosh building, damaged by fire but now under renovation. It's the height of Art Nouveau, with a sweeping stair and amazing floral and geometric patterns."

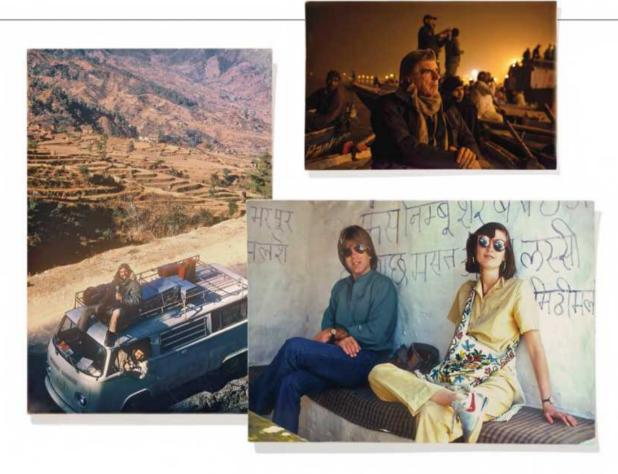
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Subcontinental Drift

MTV co-founder Tom Freston first traveled to India in 1972. Four decades on, he's still hooked—and despite the breakneck pace of modernization, still manages to lose himself a little each time.

one recent afternoon, the lobby of New Delhi's Imperial hotel was buzzing with Indian businessmen in Italian suits and well-heeled tourists in khaki safari clothing. Sitting in the white-marble atrium, I was amused by sights that other visitors might think of as expected in a five-star hotel: the Chanel boutique, the towering flower displays, the shiny pillars girding an Art Deco classic that was conceived in the original city plan in the 1930s, when New Delhi was going to be the center

of the British Empire.

I had a history here too. For several years in the 1970s, I lived part-time in Delhi while running a clothing company. Back then, the Imperial was a dilapidated Subcontinental version of L.A.'s Chateau Marmont. It smelled of mold, and its carpets were stained and rippled from the damp air-conditioning.

hotels that crowded the lanes around Connaught Place. The Imperial was also the nexus of a social scene for antiques and gem dealers, hashish smugglers, black-marketcurrency scammers, scoundrels, petty criminals, and resident foreigners like me. We called it The Hotel Imperialism. The windowless

Still, it was many cuts above the hippie and backpacker

oak-paneled bar was invariably packed by noon, its clien-

tele a mix of Rick's Café and that bar in Star Wars. They'd perch on stools for hours, smoking acrid Indian cigarettes, nursing Rosy Pelican beers, and scheming. Outside was a beautiful pool surrounded by royal palms. You could smell it a mile away-not the chlorine, mind you, but the hashish. Sweet-scented, artfully rolled joints would pass from one fraying chaise longue to the next. Pools were

Then and now

(clockwise from left): Freston rides on "some dude's" van through the Himalayas, 1972; in Varanasi, 2015; with a friend in Mount Abu. Rajasthan, 1976.



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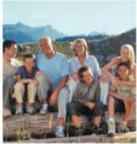
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Word of Mouth Essay

in short supply then, so on 110-degree days the Imperial was a true oasis. I would swim and drink fresh lime sodas brought by waiters in tattered white uniforms. Anything went at the Imperial. The police never seemed to come.

Now, sipping an expensive espresso in the Raj-style lobby, I wondered if any of these guests had a clue as to what used to go on here. No matter, I thought—that old crowd, like a lot of the old India, is gone. And things, in many ways, are much better now: India, which once seemed immutably resistant to progress, sidestepped the doomsday predictions with economic reforms in the 1990s that lifted millions out of poverty and liberated its long-thwarted entrepreneurial class. The resulting Wild West economy has prompted my return many times since: first when I worked in television, and lately to check in on a digital start-up that's riding the new mobile revolution. But what has really lured me back for 40-plus years is another thing entirely.

M

y passage to India began one bitter January day in 1972, when, like any levelheaded twentysomething, I quit my claustrophobic job at a New York ad agency and took off for Europe. That summer in Greece, I chatted up a

beautiful girl at a beachside café. Just back from India, she regaled me with stories of the mystical East, "the greatest show on earth." I decided on the spot to change my plans, and headed to Istanbul. From there I caught rides in cars, vans, buses, and trucks through countries you really can't go to anymore—Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan. Back then people always flashed you the peace sign.

Entering overland from Pakistan into India, I immediately saw I'd have to up my game. In teeming Amritsar, I felt an acute disorientation—a sensation I'd eventually come to savor. I willed myself to get lost each day; then, returning to my hotel at night, I closed the door and exhaled. India was still a relatively new nation; its mantra was "self-reliance," but its people struggled greatly under a stifling Socialist system that cut them off from the world. While the country had a thriving domestic press and movie business, there were few telephones, fewer televisions, and pretty much only one kind of car. People in Western dress were rare. The poverty was overwhelming and humbling: Sidewalks and train platforms were crammed with rows of sleeping people surrounded by trash; colonies of beggars lived under bridges.

But there was elation in navigating it all—just surviving the mouselike scurry of a scooter taxi careening through the labyrinth of Old Delhi was a small victory. I vowed to stay and learn all I could about the place. That so much was







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written in English was a good start. I loved the shop signs, which promised very unlikely things, like the window in Amritsar advertising BIRTH CONTROL DEVICES AND FISHING HOOKS or the Delhi store touting TOYS AND TOILETS. India seemed to be "everything all the time," as the Eagles once sang—a complicated country embracing contradiction and chaos, living in its own peculiar fast lane.

oday, signs of high-speed modernization abound in most Indian cities, and nowhere more so than in Mumbai, the country's commercial capital—a city of 21 million (nearly twice the population of New York

and Los Angeles combined), whose streets are now jammed with BMWs and lined with upscale restaurants with names like Blue Frog and The Good Wife. Rich and poor, pious and profane coexist here in ways hard for a Westerner to grasp. Towering over one of Mumbai's biggest slums is the 27-story, 400,000-square-foot home of Mukesh Ambani, India's richest man, with its 168-car garage and three helipads. And yet most nights the building stands vacant and dark, as Ambani rarely stays there: At some point it was decided that its construction violated Hindu architectural principles and could bring bad luck.

On my latest trip, after checking in on the digital start-up near Mumbai's airport (in an office full of iMacs, the young staff showed me public-service videos meant to combat the scourge of public urination), I detoured to the Jaipur Literature Festival. India has a deep reverence for the written word, from the Upanishads to Amitav Ghosh, and the festival, held in Rajasthan's historic pink city, attracts some 250,000 attendees. At times I felt like I'd landed at a TED conference: Smartphone-toting creatives vied for seats in open-air tents sponsored by Google and Ford. At the city's latest hot spot, Bar Palladio, peacocks roamed around fire pits under the desert sky. This presented quite a contrast to the dusty, dirty Jaipur I'd visited in 1973 during a major drought and food shortage, when pleading mothers would shove hollow-eyed babies into my arms.

Still, the old speed bumps endure on the road to modernity. I mused on this from the back of a scooter taxi caught in a traffic jam and a lashing rainstorm. Buses, bicycles, motorcycles, and bullock carts jockeyed for openings around a grassy roundabout that brimmed with people cutting hair, pulling out teeth, and selling pink balloons. Progress, meet pandemonium. Later that night, I was back at the Palladio, which was overrun with festival-goers. The bar's manager—a Wisconsin

native clearly despairing of India's inevitable inefficiencies—informed us that he'd run out of "foreign wine," adding, "I want to warn you that the food you ordered is going to take a very, *very* long time."

And still there are places where modern India has been kept pretty much at bay. Take Varanasi, the holiest of India's holy cities, which Mark Twain called "older than history . . . a religious hive, whose every cell is a temple, shrine, or a mosque." It is also a place where death is on full display, to the discomfort of many Westerners. We tend toward denial when it comes to facing our fates. But for Hindus, Varanasi offers a sort of "get out of jail free" card: If you die or are cremated here, you can escape rebirth, achieving moksha. And so one sees many elderly people waiting around for the reaper, cars with corpses strapped on top, funeral processions with bodies on bamboo stretchers garlanded with marigolds. They snake through a labyrinth of alleys to the "burning ghats," built on the banks of the Ganges, where they await their turn for cremation.

At dusk, I ventured out into the chaos, taking bicycle rickshaws as far as I could toward the river. The streets were choked with people and motorbikes, while sacred cows lumbered about unmolested. (I spotted one rummaging around inside a sari shop.) Eventually I maneuvered down the muddy, irregular steps of the ghats, pushing through crowds of pilgrims and holy men to the river's edge, where a guide secured a small boat.

In Varanasi, a foreigner is but an observer, and a boat is the perfect observation post. The Ganges is lined with crumbling palaces built by maharajas. Pilgrims bathe in, brush their teeth with, and even drink the water to purify themselves, impervious to the filth. I was on the lookout for floating corpses, having seen one years ago: drifting facedown, two crows on its back.

On the river it grew chilly and damp. Candles floated by on tiny saucers. The fires from funeral pyres glowed orange through the mist. I sat transfixed, every sense alive, feeling a bit holy, deep in India's grasp. The country may be racing into consumerism and modernity—something that seemed unthinkable back in 1972—but in Varanasi, that's nowhere to be seen. (Nowhere, that is, except on a nearby boat, which had STATE BANK OF INDIA painted on its side. There is always the long hand of marketing.) I flashed on the many times I had been right here on this river, first as a young man carried away by the "morphined ease" of the scene, as Allen Ginsberg described it, and now four decades later. It was, as always, the same as it ever was. •



MODERN LUXURY

Experience breathtaking views at The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas





DARK

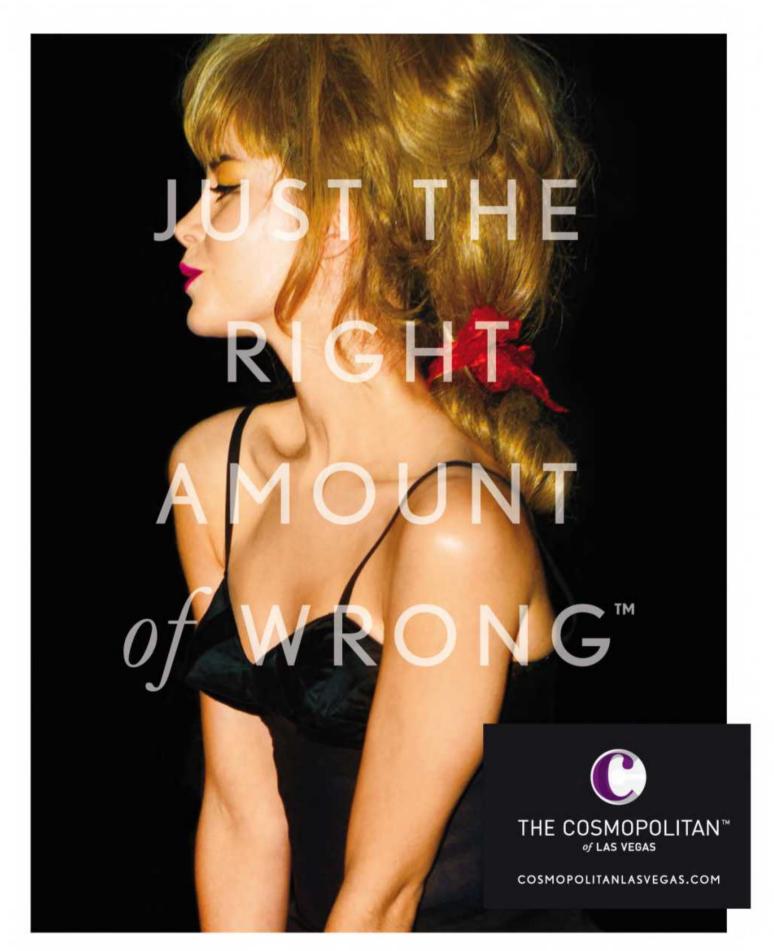
From the lustrous mahogany floors to the grand ebony-marbled bathrooms, the rich colors of these vast penthouses channel stately prestige. Pour a drink from your personal wet bar and sink into a generous onyx sectional while contemplating the contemporary art pieces on display throughout the space.

LIGHT

Everything is illuminated in these chic and sleek penthouses bathed in incandescent shades of cream and white. Sunshine pours through the floor-to-ceiling windows, accentuating an ultramodern aesthetic replete with gleaming kitchenettes and deluxe ivory bedrooms. With profound attention to detail, even the walls manage to sparkle with crystal-encrusted coverings for a most enchanting stay.

serving your favorite libation as you lounge on a sprawling terrace surrounded by the Las Vegas skyline? Fortuitously, dreams do come true at The Cosmopolitan. Showcasing the best in modern design, the resort's West End Penthouses redefine the concept of splendor. You'll need to tear yourself away from the plush residential-style accommodations to choose from the 13 culinary marvels on-site. Or let the ample offerings come to you. We won't blame you.









4 Viking Longship Explorer Suite

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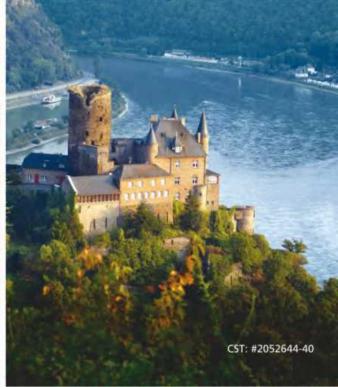
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Belmond Grand Hotel Timeo Taormina

Belmond Hotel Splendido & Splendido Mare Portofino

Grand Hotel a Villa Feltrinelli Lake Garda (left)

Hotel II Pellicano Porto Ercole

Hotel Santa Caterina Amalfi

J.K. Place Capri

Le Sirenuse *Positano*

Palazzo Avino Ravello

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- THE CONNAUGHT
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WESTIN° HOTELS & RESORTS

GO FARTHER-IT'S WORTH IT

Dunton Hot Springs

Dolores, Colorado It's a two-hour drive from already-remote Telluride, winding through the San Juan Mountains, sometimes on dirt roads. But the payoff is huge: a stay in one of 13 isolated, hand-hewn log cabins in a stunning alpine valley, with reviving soaks in mineral-rich hot springs at the restored 1800s bathhouse.

Explora

Patagonia, Chile At the center of Torres del Paine National Park (and five hours from the closest airport), Explora's whitetimber lodge has 49 spacious rooms—all with views of either the Paine ridge or Salto Chico Waterfall. Take your pick of more than 50 guided hikes and horse treks, then unwind over the best Chilean wines at the sleek Explorer's Bar.

Wickaninnish Inn

Tofino, British Columbia At this secluded resort on Vancouver Island's rugged west coast, days are spent hiking through old-growth cedar forests, exploring tide pools, trying your hand at cold-water surfing, or simply watching Pacific storms roll in beyond the big bay windows of your ocean-facing suite.

THE HOTELS WE ALWAYS RETURN TO IN PARIS

- FOUR SEASONS HOTEL GEORGE V
- HÔTEL PLAZA ATHÉNÉE
- LE MEURICE
- THE PENINSULA PARIS
- SHANGRI-LA HOTEL, PARIS

ARCHITECTURAL **WONDERS IN** THE MIDDLE **OF NOWHERE**

Oman

Alila Jabal Akhdar

The minimalist resort is constructed entirely of multicolored ophiolite rock and seems to hover over a steep gorge in the Hajar Mountains.

Amangiri

Canvon Point, Utah Its gravity-defying geometric slabs blend seamlessly into the austere desert.

Fogo Island Inn Newfoundland.

Canada It'll take at least two flights, a 60-mile drive. and then a 45-minute ferry ride to reach this ultramodern spaceship of a hotel overlooking the wild Atlantic (right).

Longitude 131°

Yulara, Australia Ever wonder what a luxury resort on Mars might look like? Probably not unlike these tented pavilions arrayed in front of the magnificent sandstone monolith of Uluru.

Tierra Atacama Hotel & Spa

San Pedro de Atacama, Chile A dazzling fortress of stone, adobe bricks, and rammed earth, with glass walls to maximize views of the Licancabur volcano and the vast Atacama Desert.

Vigilius **Mountain Resort**

Monte San Vigilio, Italy Accessible only by cable car (it's nearly 5.000 feet above sea level), this resort feels like the tree house you always wanted, with its dramatic woodenlattice facade.



IF YOU LOVE THE FOUR SEASONS PENINSULA PAPAGAYO IN COSTA RICA, TRY MUKUL IN NICARAGUA



THE SPA WHERE TREATMENTS ARE JUST THE HALF OF IT



Few spa retreats telegraph place as well as the seventeenthcentury Bio-Hotel Stanglwirt, in the Austrian Alps. The outdoor soaking pools, steam baths, and saunas are crafted of

sandstone and pinewood sourced from the nearby wildernessand even a lazy hour in the relaxation room, with its floor-to-ceiling views of Tyrolean peaks, is as rejuvenating as a turn on the massage table.

6 OTHER SPA GETAWAYS TO BOOK RIGHT NOW

Badrutt's Palace St. Moritz, Switzerland

Clinique La Prairie Clarens-Montreux, Switzerland

Les Sources de Caudalie

One&Only Palmilla Los Cabos

Park Hyatt New York Parrot Cay by COMO Turks and Caicos

Bordeaux

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THE **OVER-THE- TOP DESIGN**HOTELS WE WANT TO MOVE INTO

Aman Canal Grande

Venice, for its embossed leather wallpaper.

Casa de Madrid for the murals, marble busts, and centuries-old oil paintings.

Das Stue *Berlin*, and its neoclassical facade and Danish minimalist interiors (2).

Ett Hem *Stockholm*, for llse Crawford's brilliant way with vintage pieces.

The Greenbrier White Sulphur Springs, W.Va., for Dorothy Draper's flurry of pinks and greens (4).

Ham Yard London, and Kit Kemp's fearless use of color (1).

Hoshinoya *Kyoto*, and its lustrous century-old wood finishes.

Il Convento di Santa Maria do Constantinopoli

Puglia, Italy, for its treasure trove of masks, carvings, and ceramics.

J.K. Place Roma for its retro rosewood-paneled bar.

Riad El Fenn *Marrakech,* for those jewel-colored plaster walls (5).

San Giorgio *Mykonos*, and the way the traditional Greek textiles pop against whitewashed walls (6).

Soho House Istanbul, for the fireplaces, frescoe

for the fireplaces, frescoes, and soaring ceilings inside the 1870s palazzo.

Soniat House *New Orleans,* and its wrought iron balconies and vibrant green shutters.

Wheatleigh Lenox, Mass., for its celadon accents, original stained glass—and that elegant staircase (3).













JUST ANOTHER MANIC MONDAY Motu Monday

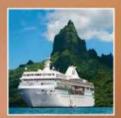
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sunset. A campfire

LET YOURSELF GO

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LAKE POWELL
PROVIDED THE
EXCLAMATION
POINT ON A
WONDERFUL
ARIZONA
ADVENTURE.

As highlighted in the October and November issues of Condé Nast Traveler, our team of adventurers lived it up during their travels from Tucson-where they enjoyed amazing golf, savory culinary treats. and horseback riding-to tasting their way through the Verde Valley wine trail and ghost hunting in Jerome. Then it was off to relaxing and exploring Sedona's red rocks and restaurants, followed by more adventure in Flagstaff with treetop obstacle courses, mountain biking, and tasty bites and brews. Next was the long-awaited stop at Lake Powell for excitement best experienced via luxury houseboat and airplane.

The Arizona Expedition team arrived at Lake Powell just before was soon built, providing the only light for a dark night that revealed the totality of stars and the Milky Way. Come morning, Gabe whipped up a delicious beachside breakfast from scratch that included steak from Proper Meats + Provisions, and eggs with potatoes and salsa verde. Meanwhile, the Bryan Brothers enjoyed some tricks of their own on the houseboat, switching between an 8 iron and the waterslide. Out on the water, Chelsea and Zach were full throttle on personal watercraft before meeting back with the crew for breakfast. Finally, the highlight of the trip was about to take place for Chelsea, Wesley Bryan, and Zach-skydiving. A jump from 16,000 feet over Lake Powell provided the exclamation point on a wonderful Arizona adventure.

Like what Arizona is serving up for our team of adventurers? Learn more

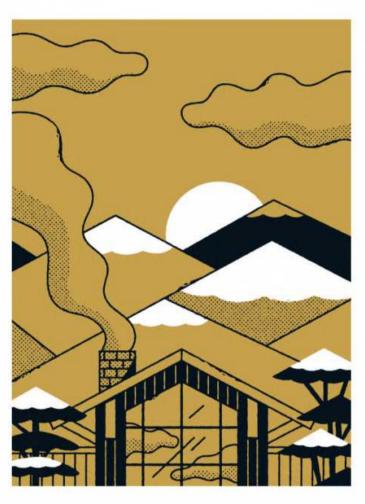
about these great places at AZExpedition.com.

*Social-media usernames provided are for each personality's instagram account.



ATION BY OHRISTOPHER DELORENZO. CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY BELMOND; COURTESY ASHFORD. ; COURTESY SOFITEL LEGEND METROPOLE; PEGGY WONG; MANDARIN ORIENTAL HONG KONG; BRITTANY AMBRIDGE/DOMINO

THE MOUNTAIN RESORT THAT DOESN'T FEEL LIKE A THEME PARK



When I was four years old and living in a very Mormon suburb of Salt Lake City, my very un-Mormon mom and dad packed up the Jeep Wagoneer and took me skiing at Deer Valley Resort. They didn't ski themselves, but they were phenomenal at après, throwing back glasses of California chardonnay in their down jackets on the patio at Stein Eriksen Lodge while I conquered the bunny hill. At the end of the day, I too engaged in the ski-school version of high-altitude unwinding: I wrestled off my boots and sipped preposterously good hot chocolate while warming up near one of the lodge's many stone fireplaces. I remember thinking how Stein Eriksen felt magical and weirdly foreign, as if it didn't belong in my home state. It looked like it was plucked from '60s Switzerland and dropped among the most perfect alpine woods in the Wasatch Range. Makes sense. The Stein Eriksen, a Norwegian alpine skier who won Olympic gold for giant slalom in Oslo in 1952, drew heavily from the European ski hotels of his youth when he opened the lodge. And thankfully, not much has changed. It's still the one I want to share with my fouryear-old daughter (and my non-skiing husband, who will probably skip the chardonnay in favor of the locally made whiskey). - CANDICE RAINEY

IF YOU LOVE ALILA VILLAS ULUWATU IN BALI, TRY NIHIWATU IN SUMBA

THE ONE
PLACE WHERE
YOUR HOTEL
MATTERS
MORE THAN
ANYTHING
IS INDIA

In oft-overwhelming India, your hotel is both a conduit to your destination and a refuge from it.

Ahilya Fort Madhya Pradesh

Alila Diwa Goa Ananda in the Himalayas Uttarakhand

The Imperial New Delhi

Oberoi Amarvilas Agra

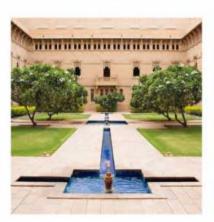
Oberoi Udaivilas Udaipur

Taj Falaknuma Palace Hyderabad

Taj Lake Palace Udaipur

Taj Mahal Palace Mumbai

Umaid Bhawan Palace Jodhpur (right)



TRAVEL BACK IN TIME

Hotels with the alluring charm of a bygone era (and the amenities of 2016).



1599 Belmond Villa San Michele Florence



1715 **Ashford Castle** *Cong, Ireland*



1901 Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi



1927 **The Ahwahnee** Yosemite National Park



1963 Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong Hong Kong



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Indulging, Luxurious & Beyond









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EVERYDAY
AT THE
MULIA, MULIA
RESORT &

- NUSA DUA, BALI

VILLAS

BEACH RESORT

NO.

Condé Nast Traveler's 2014 Readers' Choice Awards

TOP 25

Condé Nast Traveler's 2015 Readers' Choice Awards



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Experience unrivaled luxury and breathtaking beauty on Bali's lush Nusa Dua coastline

Escape the everyday at The Mulia, Mulia Resort & Villas – Nusa Dua, Bali. Whether you choose The Mulia all-suite accommodations, the rooms and suites of Mulia Resort, or the intimate hillside pavilions of Mulia Villas, your stay in Bali will be extraordinary. It is no surprise the resorts continue to be honored in *Condé Nast Traveler's* most prestigious rankings.

Relax in The Mulia's large indoor-outdoor accommodations overlooking a Balinese statuelined infinity pool, or enjoy the Mulia Resort's unmatched dining options and the lagoon pools winding throughout the grounds. In a terraced landscape inspired by rice fields, the Balinese-style pavilions of Mulia Villas offer views over private pools and gardens out to the Indian Ocean.

Rejuvenate your body and spirit with the Mulia Spa's indulgent treatments incorporating Balinese, Asian, and Western techniques, or go on a tropical adventure—beautiful Bali boasts activities including diving, snorkeling, surfing, bird-watching, and exploring the volcanic Mount Batur. It's bound to be an unforgettable experience thanks to The Mulia, Mulia Resort & Villas.

20 HOLIDAY HOTELS IN ASIA & INDIA

Condé Nast Traveller UK 2014 Readers' Travel Awards

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WE FOUND OUR FAVORITE BOWL OF PASTA— AND IT'S NOT IN ITALY

Reason enough to book a weekend at bucolic Lime Wood, in Hampshire, England: the housemade pastas from acclaimed London chef Angela Hartnett and her kitchen partner Luke Holderincluding an ethereal spaghetti with sweet tomatoes, chilies, and succulent lobster from the nearby Isle of Wight. After lunch, grab a pair of Hunter wellies, step right outside, and walk off those carbs in the 900-year-old New Forest.



MORE HOTELS WE'D TRAVEL TO JUST FOR THESE DISHES

Babylonstoren

South Africa
Orange tea cake with
cream cheese frosting
and blueberries and
figs from the hotel's
farm (above).

Blackberry Farm

Tennessee S'mores cooked over a fire pit under a star-filled Southern sky.

Conservatorium Hotel *Amsterdam*

The breakfast spread of Dutch cheeses, cured meats, and fish to lure us

from our feather bed.

Hidden Pond

Kennebunkport, Maine Spinney Creek oysters dressed with cucumber, serrano, and tarragon.

Mandarin Oriental Tokyo

Sora's skyhigh *omakase* from sushi masters.

Metropolitan by COMO Bangkok

Chicken coconut soup topped with crunchy green mango.

The NoMad Hotel

New York
The absurdly decadent roast chicken stuffed with foie gras, brioche, and black truffles.

Park Hyatt Saigon

A savory breakfast of pho noodle soup on the frangipani-lined terrace.

Rosewood Beijing

The most luxurious
Peking duck in town—
flame-roasted and
served in a rosewood box.

The Thief Oslo

Luscious black-syrupand-fennel bread, still warm from the oven.

IF YOU LOVE THE LODGE AT SEAISLAND GOLF CLUB IN GEORGIA,

TRY TRUMP INTERNATIONAL GOLF LINKS & HOTEL IN IRELAND

THE HOTELS WE ALWAYS RETURN TO IN LOS ANGELES

- ACE HOTEL DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES
- CHATEAU MARMONT
- HOTEL BEL-AIR
- SHUTTERS ON THE BEACH
- SUNSET TOWER HOTEL

GO FARTHER-IT'S WORTH IT

Hacienda de San Antonio

Comala, Mexico
At the foot of an active volcano, the colonial-style estate is a 2½-hour drive from Guadalajara airport (or use the hotel's private landing strip, if that's how you roll). Draped in tropical gardens, the property is set in a 5,000-acre nature preserve that's best explored on horseback.

Hótel Búðir Snæfellsnes Peninsula, Iceland Here, puffins are your only neighbors. This is unadulterated natural goodness at its best: lava fields, volcanoes, and the roiling Atlantic, right at your doorstep. Guest rooms are simple and spare; book a deluxe so you can gaze out at Snæfellsjökull National Park from your claw-foot tub.

Taj Tashi Thimphu, Bhutan Nestled among the monasteries and mountain passes of Bhutan's remote Thimpu Valley, the 66 thoughtfully designed rooms at this palatial retreat come with Buddhist murals and staggering Himalaya views.



THE AFRICAN **SAFARI LODGES** YOU HAVEN'T **HEARD OF YET**



Eight amazing properties beyond the rightly loved big brands (&Beyond, Singita, Wilderness)-each tailormade for a certain type of traveler.

Camp Nomade *Chad,* for next-level bragging rights.

Dorobo Safaris

Tanzania, for families who don't want to spend a fortune.

Greystoke Mahale Tanzania, for beach-

loving honeymooners. Jack's Camp

Botswana, for stylish

adventurers.

Mwiba Lodge

Tanzania, for families looking for all-out luxury.

Richard's River Camp Kenya, for a big, splashy group party.

Segera Retreat Kenya, for multi-gen trips (left).

Sirikoi Kenya, for unbeatable wildlife.

IF YOU LOVE LA MAMOUNIA IN MARRAKECH, TRY DAR AHLAM IN QUARZAZATE

TWO VERY GOOD ARGUMENTS TO TAKE A CRUISE RIGHT NOW



WITH THE KIDS ...

Not long ago, I was enjoying a blissfully adult dinnera potée champenoise with a champagne cocktail-at Remy, the best restaurant on the Disney Dream. Before the trip, I knew Disney's magic would charm my kids. How could it not, with Elsa and Anna wandering the decks or the Jedi Training Academy inside the ship's very own Millennium Falcon? What I wasn't expecting was for the alchemy to work on me. That had a lot to do with our calming and surprisingly quiet deluxe oceanview stateroom, which had its own private veranda. It's where my wife and I had our vacation, sipping sparkling wine while the kids whooped it up with Rex and Slinky Dog in a replica of Andy's room from Toy Story. And though the Dream sails admittedly predictable Caribbean itineraries—a major stop is the private Castaway Cay-other Disney ships are bound for more exotic ports like Bergen, Cartagena, Lisbon, and even St. Petersburg. For us, there's always next year. - ZACH EVERSON

... OR WITHOUT

Paddling a sea kayak through a desolately beautiful Norwegian fjord, touring the Taj Mahal at dawn when the light is best for taking pictures, exploring the sixteenth-century colonial churches of Olinda, Brazil: Forget everything you thought you knew about stodgy cruise-ship shore excursions. Seabourn, among other smartened-up cruise lines, is partnering with UNESCO to offer intimate group day-trips that don't feel like you're eating your vegetables, with experts demystifying iconic sites like Petra, Jordan, and Australia's Kakadu National Park. Also trending: itins that are designed to let passengers spend a night away from the ship, making inland destinations such as Angkor Wat or Mandalay suddenly accessible by sea. And while these decadent vessels have lavish spas and large staterooms reminiscent of whitewashed Mediterranean hotels, it's those transporting, land-bound moments that will make you rethink how you'll get to see that next destination on your wish list. - CAROLYN SPENCER BROWN



THE HOTELS TO CHECK OUT EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT CHECKING IN

Auberge du Soleil Napa Valley Have one more cabernet on the terrace at sunset.

The Carlyle, A Rosewood Hotel

New York After all these years, it's (still) all about Bemelmans, baby.

Chiltern Firehouse London Marylebone's hottest night out. Wait, is that the Beckhams?

Fairmont Peace Hotel Shanghai Ogle the soaring and impeccably preserved Art Deco lobby.

Gravetye ManorSussex, England Literally wrote the book

on English gardens.

Halekulani *Honolulu*Dress up a bit and knock back a mai tai at L'Aperitif.

Hotel Fasano São Paulo

Have you been to the sexy jazz club off the lobby?

Hotel Grande Bretagne Athens For a rooftop lunch with views of the Acropolis.

Sofitel Legend Santa Clara Cartagena Take a wander in the jungly courtyard gardens.

The Upper House Hong Kong Drink up Asia's greatest skyline from the 49th-floor bar.

IF YOU LOVE BARNSLEY HOUSE IN THE COTSWOLDS, TRY SUMMER LODGE COUNTRY HOUSE HOTEL IN DORSET



THE RENO DIDN'T RUIN THEM

When a landmark hotel undergoes a makeover, you can only hope it'll emerge with its soul intact. Fortunately, these recent renovations didn't mess up a good thing.

Arizona Biltmore

Hotel d'Angleterre Copenhagen

The Jefferson Washington, D.C.

La Bastide de Marie Ménerbes. France

The Lanesborough

London
Raffles Hotel

Singapore
Rajmahal Palace

Rajmahal Palace Jaipur

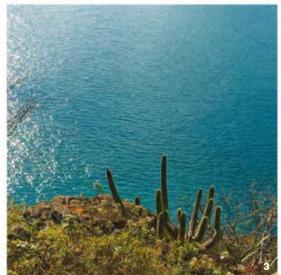
Singita Boulders Lodge Sabi Sand Reserve, South Africa

THE HOTELS WE ALWAYS RETURN TO IN NEW YORK CITY

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OUR WINTER SURVIVAL GUIDE:GET YOURSELF TO ONE OF THESE BEACHES

Less than an hour by private plane from Fiji's main airport—and a world away from everything else—lies Laucala Island (2), a seven-mile-long atoll with an almost unbelievable 16 staff for each of the resort's 25 villas. Even when Laucala is "full," there's a good chance you won't see another guest, whether you're snoozing on a secluded beach, horseback riding through coconut groves, or exploring reefs in the resort's two-passenger submarine. Yep, you read that right: submarine.

9 OTHER BEACH RESORTS TO VISIT THIS YEAR

Cheval Blanc Randheli Maldives (1)

Dorado Beach, A Ritz-Carlton Reserve Puerto Rico

El Nido Pangulasian Island Philippines

Four Seasons Resort Langkawi Malaysia

Guana Island British Virgin Islands (3) Hilton Bora Bora Hui Resort & Spa French Polynesia

One&Only Hayman Island Australia

Ponta dos Ganchos Resort Brazil

Trisara *Thailand* (4)



GEARED FOR ADVENTURE

Follow avid sports photographer Jimmy Chin as he prepares for the ride of his life.



"I'm inspired by the interplay between humans and extreme landscapes," says photographer-filmmaker and adventurer Jimmy Chin. "And by the tenacity it takes to get out there and push what's possible."

One particularly arctic Wyoming morning, Chin set out to hike into Amora Vida, a steep couloir tucked deep into the south face of the Tetons. The subzero winds were brutal, but Chin refused to let that stop him. "We had packed skis, crampons, and avalanche equipment the night before," he says. "We drove out to the parking lot early and geared up. It was marginal weather at best, but I was determined to make tracks."

Chin's own tenacity—and gear—eventually paid off. "I needed everything that I brought, from my boots to my gloves," he says. And when it came to Chin's outerwear, he relied on his wind- and waterproof GORE-TEX® gear. "Your clothing is key on a trek like this. Your life can depend on it."

After a grueling three-hour approach through the crevices of Garnet Canyon, Chin finally dropped down into the protected south face. "It was monumental," he says. "I was carving through two feet of untouched powder." But Chin's ultimate payoff was more than snow-deep. "Climbing, skiing, and shooting are my biggest passions in life. Amora Vida gave me all three in one day."



All GORE-TEX" gear carries the GUARANTEED TO KEEP YOU DRY" promise. GORE-TEX", GORE", and GUARANTEED TO KEEP YOU DRY" are trademarks of W.L. Gore & Associates, inc.



FEEL THE LOVE IN SOUTH AFRICA

HETHER YOU'RE PLANNING A ROMANTIC DESTINATION WEDDING, an adventurous honeymoon, or seeking an unforgettable escape for two—prepare to be seduced by South Africa. Spend a few nights in an opulent lodge on the Sabi Sands Game Reserve. Slowly traverse the savannah aboard the luxurious Blue Train or Rovos Rail. Sip signature wines while overlooking the lush Western Cape vineyards. And of course, visit the Kimberley Diamond Museum and witness where it all began.



Nowhere inspires romance quite like South Africa.

I. SABI SANDS GAME LODGES

Spot leopards and rhinos by day and then retreat back to your decadent luxury lodge for an intimate couple's massage and a candlelit five-star meal. No matter which experience you prefer—colonial romance, classic bush, or sophisticated chic—the Sabi Sands Game Reserve in Mpumalanga is riddled with gorgeously architected, impeccably appointed lodges that will elevate your safari to an epic love story.

2. STELLENBOSCH WINELANDS

A stone's throw from Cape Town, Stellenbosch is an elegant, historical town with stately buildings and oak-lined streets—and it's also the heart of South Africa's wine country. Set off on a leisurely tasting tour of the region's countless vine-yards and discover exquisite varieties of Shiraz, Chardonnay, Sémillon, and Pinotage, a dark-red grape exclusive to the area. With the trees swaying in the breeze and mountains all around, this is a wine lover's paradise.

3. NAMAQUALAND WILDFLOWER ROUTE

You don't have to be a romantic to be swept away by the sea of flowers that blooms each spring along the arid plains of the Northern Cape. Thousands of species announce themselves in vibrant purples, piercing yellows, brilliant reds—the endless kaleidoscopic colors are breathtaking. The most vivid displays usually begin a few hours north of Cape Town, so pack a picnic lunch and go for the drive of a lifetime.

4. THE BLUE TRAIN AND ROVOS RAIL

The steam train is the ultimate icon of romantic travel, and South Africa's Blue Train and Rovos Rail are keeping the spirit of the vanished relic alive. Hop aboard from Pretoria to Cape Town for a journey that combines the allure of bygone days with modern suites, superior amenities, and world-class cuisine. Venture through the Great Karoo desert and over grasslands teeming with wildlife. Gaze out the window. And at each other.

5. KIMBERLEY DIAMOND Museum

It all began when the first South African diamond was discovered in 1866—a 21.25-carat stone, fittingly called the Eureka. This sole discovery quickly ignited the modern diamond industry, and the founding of De Beers. Take a trip back in time at the fascinating Kimberley Museum and ogle the magnificent display of jewelry and uncut diamonds. Get engaged, if you're not already.



Under the Volcanoes

By ANNA WINGER Photographs by MATTHEW WILLIAMS

WHEN I WAS 13, I MOVED FROM
MASSACHUSETTS TO CUERNAVACA WITH
MY ANTHROPOLOGIST PARENTS, MY
LITTLE BROTHER, 26 BOXES OF BOOKS,
AND THE FAMILY DOG. I STILL REMEMBER
THE FIRST TIME I DROVE OVER THE COOL,
PINE-DECORATED MOUNTAIN RANGE
THAT SEPARATES IT FROM MEXICO CITY,
AROUND THAT BEND IN THE HIGHWAY
WHERE THE CITY SPREADS OUT AT YOUR
FEET AND SUDDENLY YOU SEE THE



GREAT VOLCANOES: POPOCATÉPETL AND IZTACCÍHUATL. AN HOUR OR SO BY CAR FROM THE CAPITAL, IN THE STATE OF MORELOS, AT AN ELEVATION OF NEARLY 5,000 FEET, CUERNAVACA IS BUILT ON SEVEN INTERSECTING RAVINES AND SURROUNDED BY MOUNTAINS; HOUSES ARE STACKED UP THE HILLSIDE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE MAGNIFICENT VIEWS. IN 1983, BOTH VOLCANOES WERE STILL CAPPED WITH SNOW YEAR-ROUND.

Because there was no other bilingual school for a girl my age, I attended an all-girls Catholic academy housed in a palazzo that had been brought over from Italy, stone by stone, by an eccentric American millionaire. There was something both exotic and cozy about this place-lush grounds contained by a high wall, a fountain of Poseidon, naked, in the central courtyard. Once a week we sang the Mexican National Anthem, and every morning we said the Lord's Prayer. For the first six months I took communion at school Mass on Fridays, until I came home on Ash Wednesday with a cross on my forehead. After that, my shocked agnostic parents insisted that I hang back in the pews. During religion class, I was allowed by the nuns to sunbathe by the school's peanut-shaped swimming pool, where, covered in coconut oil, I would listen to Michael Jackson on a first-generation Walkman.

On weekends, my parents dragged me and my brother around to look at pyramids. Sometimes we made the pilgrimage to Mexico City to tour the Museo Nacional de Antropología.

Sometimes we went to Xochitlán, the largest excavation site in Morelos. And sometimes we followed maps drawn up by their archaeologist friends, driving our Mexican-made Renault Le Car without AC along trails that led to unexcavated grassy hills only identifiable as pyramids from above. Mexico was one of the first places where aerial photography was used by archaeologists—who discovered an awful lot of grassy hills.

Now I live in Berlin, where, sadly, there are no archaeological sites to visit with my children. I only dream of such hot weekends. But believe me: At the time it was no teenager's fantasy. I was always begging to be taken to the beach in Acapulco or left behind to hang out with my school friends in Cuernavaca.

The ringleader of our clique, Yvonne, lived in a house that her parents had bought from Rita Hayworth. We called it the *casa de los espíritus*, after the Isabel Allende novel, because magical things happened there. Once, I saw the family cat nursing a puppy. I shaved my legs for the first time in that house. We watched early MTV there, with Spanish subtitles, memorizing the words to every song. And then we discovered the discos. This was in the heady days of New Wave music, smoke machines, and Drakkar Noir. It was heaven.

the Ex-Convento Dominico de la Natividad, a sixteenth-

Previous page:

Tepoztlán and

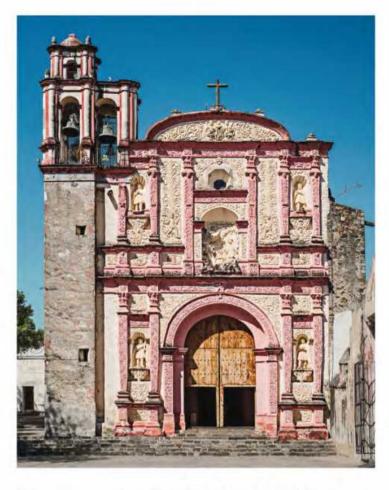
A view of

century monastery.
Right, clockwise
from top left:

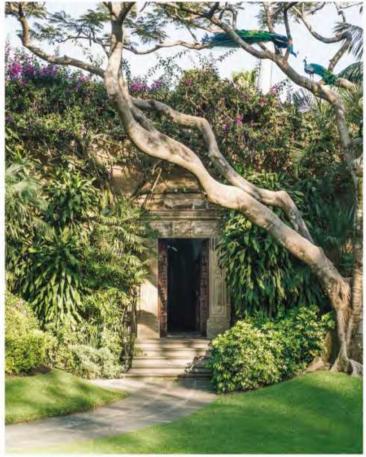
The Catedral de Cuernavaca, founded in 1525 by Mexico's first Franciscan friars; parrots at Las Mañanitas hotel; moles and guisados in Cuernavaca; the garden entrance to Las Mañanitas.

RECENTLY,

I traveled to Cuernavaca to research a novel I'm writing. Our old ringleader, Yvonne, is now a prominent cancer researcher and medical school professor. These days, whenever I'm in town, instead of sneaking out to go dancing we revisit the museums and pyramids I complained about as a teenager, talk politics over margaritas made with fresh tamarind juice, and go for *temazcales*—ritual saunas led by a medicine man.















From left: The Museo Robert Brady, in the former home (originally part of a monastery) of a Hollywood expat; the elaborate altar at the Catedral de Cuernavaca; poolside at Misión del Sol Resort & Spa in neighboring Jiutepec.



CUERNAVACA AND TEPOZTLÁN CONTINUE TO EXIST IN A KIND OF EXQUISITE LIMBO BETWEEN PAST AND PRESENT."

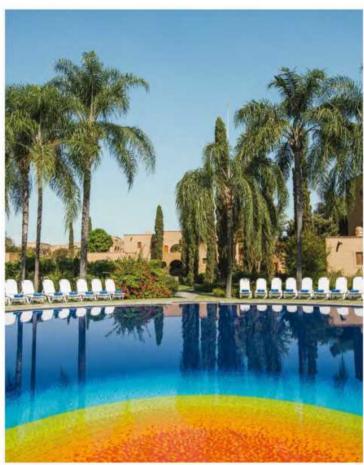
Cuernavaca has expanded at the edges since the 1980s, but the ancient and contemporary still live side by side in a way that is rare. Most of Mexico's other tourist destinations have cleaned up and pushed real life to the fringes. Here, even tourists get caught up in the flow of business as usual. Within a single square mile downtown, you can timetravel from one layer of ancient and colonial history to another and, in between, watch breakfast meetings taking place over enchiladas suizas at Sanborns, browse through a rainbow of pressed guayabera shirts displayed at Izcalli, and experience the bustle of the enormous central market, where edible cactus, beeswax church candles, and even throwing stars are available under one roof.

I am not the first foreign visitor to be enchanted. Because the weather is always perfect, the nineteenth-century explorer Alexander von Humboldt nicknamed Cuernavaca la ciudad de la eterna primavera, the

city of eternal spring. The Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés built himself a palace here in the 1520s. During his brief reign in Mexico, the Hapsburg emperor Maximilian and his wife, Charlotte, made Cuernavaca their summer residence. In the 1950s and '60s, it was discovered by the international jet set: Haile Selassie and Gary Cooper are said to have had vacation homes in Cuernavaca, and Woolworth heiress Barbara Hutton built an elaborate Japanese palace and garden outside the city, complete with an authentic Kabuki theater. The palace, called Sumiya, is now a hotel. Blacklisted Hollywood writers found safe haven in the city; it is also where the Shah of Iran spent the summer of 1979, when he first went into exile.

This is a city skilled at keeping secrets, but if you know where to look, it gives them up. High bougainvillea-covered walls contain luxurious neocolonial houses and bright-blue swimming pools, cocktail conversation,





birds of paradise, ghosts of parties past. Walk into the garden at Las Mañanitas, the famed 1950s-era downtown hotel, and you'll discover peacocks wandering freely

in the verdant hush. Up on the innocuous second floor of Cortés's palace by the zócalo, under a long outdoor portico, is a mural portraying the conquest of New Spain and the Mexican Revolution, which Diego Rivera completed in 1930. It is nothing short of epic. Behind a plain green wall on a side street next to the main cathedral is the kaleidoscopic Museo Robert Brady-a private museum showcasing the maximalist style of an American expat who lived through the Hollywood heyday, collecting everything from ceramic Virgins of Guadalupe to Frida Khalo paintings. And just up the street is the Jardín Borda, the expansive botanical garden laid out in the 1860s for the Hapsburgs.

IF CUERNAVACA

is an adult place in which to contemplate history and dress for dinner, the nearby village of Tepoztlán is its hippie little sister. Encircled by dramatic cliffs and watched over by El Tepozteco, a pyramid perched a mile straight up a mountain, Tepoztlán has always cultivated a mystical ambience. On weekends it fills with day travelers from Mexico City, who make the short but demanding hike up to the pyramid-an Aztec temple dedicated to the god of moonshine, or pulque, and built around 1500-to enjoy the view and feed the tejones, a funny breed of badger that supposedly exists only there. The village has been saved from overdevelopment by some zealous conservationists-there are a few more cafés now, a bank machine, and a store selling delicious organic chocolate, but mostly it's the same sleepy place I remember from when I used to hike up to El Tepozteco on Sundays with my family 30 years ago.

Afterwards, we always went to eat sopessmall, thick tortillas piled high with beans, lettuce, and crema-at a stand by Tepoztlán's market. That stand has since become Los Colorines, a cheerful pink restaurant that has branches in both Tepoztlán and Cuernavaca and is run by two generations of the same family. Today, Los Colorines is my first stop off the plane. I lived in Oaxaca for a few years in my twenties, and I enjoy a midnight tlayuda as much as anyone else, but when I talk about Mexican food, Morelos-and specifically Tepoztlán-is what I'm talking about. Los Colorines's chiles en nogada, stuffed green poblano peppers made up in the colors of the Mexican flag, with a white walnut sauce and pomegranate seeds, just might be my favorite



Left: The collection inside the Museo Robert Brady includes textiles, folk art, and paintings by Frida Kahlo, Rufino Tamavo. and Diego Rivera.

The Cuernavaca Short List

GETTING THERE

Cuernavaca and Tepoztlán are quick day-trips from Mexico City and just 30 minutes apart. A taxi will run you about \$100 each way. or the experts at Journey Mexico can arrange a private driver.

STAY

Las Mañanitas, in

Cuernavaca is a colonial-style villa with a collection of exotic birds and lush grounds engulfed by palms and jacaranda. Misión del Sol Resort & Spa, in nearby Jiutepec, has adobe-built rooms and a great temazcal, or sauna

EAT & DRINK

Los Colorines (in

both Cuernavaca and Tepoztlán) serves traditional dishes like chilaquiles for lunch. with Jamaica a drink made from hibiscus flowers. For cocktails and dinner (the lighter meal in Mexico), try the garden at Las Mañanitas, where the homemade potato chips and margaritas are famously addictive. Or sip a refino at El Ciruelo, with a view of the Tepoztlán cliffs.

food. And don't get me started on the tortitas of cauliflower and broccoli in tomato sauce, quesadillas with squash blossoms, and the sweet café de olla. Everything is fresh, and everything is locally sourced-not because it's fashionable nowadays but because that's the way they've always done it.

Gabriela Cámara, a former schoolmate in Cuernavaca and now the chef-owner of Mexico City's beloved Contramar restaurant and the recently opened Cala, in San Francisco, was raised on a farm in Tepoztlán, where her Italian mother and Mexican father built an ecological house, grew their own vegetables, raised animals. They let their daughter run around freely, so Cámara learned about milpas, tortillas, and the cycle of the corn from village women who only cooked what was in season.

Another school friend, Ana García, runs a cooking school in Tepoztlán that emphasizes plant-based recipes. She explains that there are 11 microclimates in this village alone, making it possible to grow a wide range of produce, from pineapples to peaches. This includes vegetables unique to the region such as the huauzontle, a broccoli-like weed (goosefoot in English) that is sautéed like spinach or batter-fried with a hunk of cheese. Students at García's La Villa Bonita are taken to gather wild herbs and forage for mushrooms in the mountains.

MORELOS WAS

where a peasant uprising spearheaded by Emiliano Zapata helped spark the Mexican Revolution of 1910. The soldiers' drink of choice was a spirit unique to the state called refino, distilled from agave cactus. Long obscured by its better-known sisters, tequila (from Jalisco) and mezcal (from Oaxaca),

refino has recently been experiencing a smallbatch revival in Morelos. If entrepreneurial Mexicans used to look outside for their ideas, now they are also turning inward to build on products and practices born at home. The creation of artisanal goods, from handmade soaps to high-concept handicrafts, is flourishing. Another schoolmate, Alejandra Mojica, grows agave on a gorgeous ranch outside Cuernavaca, where she distills three kinds of refino: blanco, maduro, and añejo. Her brand is called Araxo-Morelos slang for wow.

In British novelist Malcolm Lowry's Cuernavaca masterpiece, Under the Volcano, set in 1938, he calls the city Quauhnahuac, after the original Aztec settlement. One summer when I was living there, John Huston directed a film of that book in an area famously colonized by retired CIA agents and blacklisted Hollywood writers. Everyone emerged from their fortresses to watch Jacqueline Bisset and Albert Finney. Although the film was shot in August, the crew replicated the decor of the Day of the Dead, which is in November. Long after the production had left town, colorful paper decorations still clung to the trees.

When I was young, the state of Morelos seemed very far from Massachusetts. Phone calls were expensive, the mail was impossible. That corner of Mexico quickly became my universe. Since then, trade agreements, new highways, and the Internet have brought the whole country that much closer to the American border. But Cuernavaca and Tepoztlán continue to exist in a kind of exquisite limbo between past and present that makes them fertile soil for the imagination. The novel I'm writing contains a few made-up characters, a few people I actually knew, much local mythology, and animals both imagined and real. The tejones make an appearance, of course, as do the Mañanitas peacocks. And I have given my city a new name, too: Teopanzolco-after one of my favorite pyramids. ◆





IF YOU HAVEN'T BEEN YET, LUCKY YOU.

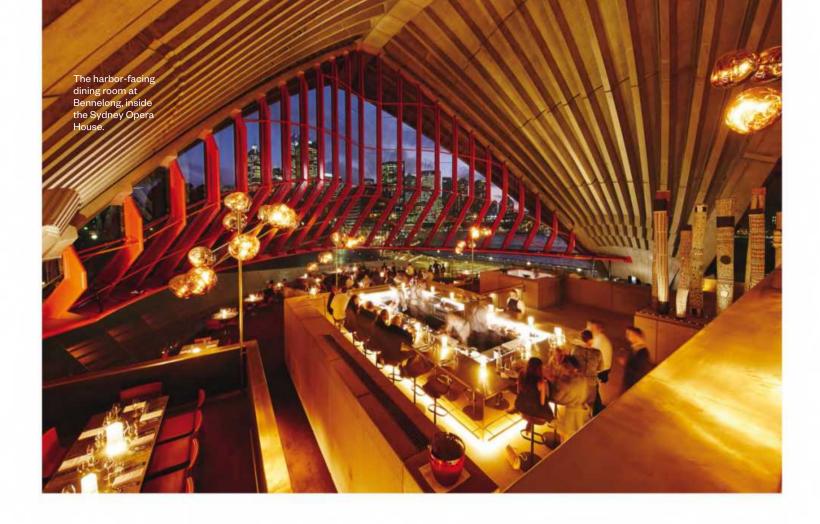
And if you've traveled here before, well, you won't believe what you've been missing since. Something curious and remarkable has taken hold in the antipodes: At this moment, on all fronts, Australia is simply—as the kids say—crushing it. ¶ Why does this remote yet familiar culture have such a lock on our imagination? Simple: Because they're doing it better. That elusive, undeniable thing we

call "lifestyle" has become Australia's calling card, an effortless cool the rest of us try to appropriate but never truly can. It's that frontier spirit sparked by true isolation, a why-not ingenuity born of selfreliance, a lightness tempering the shade of the Commonwealth, a worldliness informed by years of roaming the globe. (Here, the walkabout is a birthright, travel a veritable mandate.) At home and abroad, Ozzies meet the world with an enviable blend of edge and ease, an aesthetic rigor free of pretense, and an embrace of the outdoors paired with urbane sophistication. (You taking notes, California?) ¶ Relax, says a whole sun-kissed continent. No worries. This, in 2016, is not just how we want to travel, it's how we want to be. Australians have been living that life for a while now, which, of course, is how they make it look easy. It starts, as the best days do, with flat whites and avocado toast-and it only gets better from there. Australia's food culture is as inventive and influential as any today, and that old paradigm of Aussie cooks heading overseas to make their names has lately been reversed, with marquee chefs beating paths here (g'day, Heston and René!). ¶The country's style quotient is on a similar trajectory-just ask Sydney tastemakers like Sibella Court, Maurice Terzini, Justin Hemmes, and Megan Morton. (Actually, we did it for you-see page 98.) Hotels, too, are upping their game. Two newcomers in Sydney are engines of change for entire neighborhoods, while others are demanding attention from as far afield as Tasmania, Perth, and Canberra (Canberra! Believe itpage 109). ¶ As if you needed further incentive to book a trip to Australia, there are now countless more reasons to go. (And with the Aussie dollar's recent drop, it's also a great value.) The following pages are just the beginning-you'll find much, much more online at cntraveler.com, where we'll tell you how to sail and scuba the Great Barrier Reef, explore the Outback, or simply plan the perfect weekend in Melbourne or Sydney. All of which is our way of saying: Australia is our choice for 2016. Do yourself a favor and get down here as soon as you can.

January is Australia month at cntraveler.com. Follow the hashtag #MyAustralia on our social media channels (that's @cntraveler on Twitter and Instagram) for personal posts from our team of Australian tastemakers.







RENÉ REDZEPI'S Must-Eats

"They're searching for something in Australia," says the chef-owner of Copenhagen's Noma. "They're not food preservationists-they're on the verge of creating something mind-bogglingly new." René Redzepi is such a believer that he's relocating his restaurant to Sydney this month for a ten-week stint (reservations sold out in less than 90 seconds). Australia's a natural fit for the world's most famous forager, who spent much of 2015 combing the continent for obscure native ingredients: "We found spiders that taste like crabs, bizarre bush fruit, and magpie geese that feed on water chestnuts and mangoes." Redzepi also scoured Sydney for culinary inspiration, finding it at these eminently relaxed, quintessentially Aussie standouts.

BILLY KWONG

"She's not well known internationally, but [owner] Kylie Kwong is one of the cleverest people in the chef world—showcasing her immigrant-Chinese background in a marriage with native Australian ingredients to create a new reality of food. Her dumplings stuffed with warrigal greens? Brilliant and delicious."

SPICE TEMPLE

"Neil Perry is probably the best restaurateur on the planet. At his Chinese place, Spice Temple, they take cooking very seriously—creating spicy, authentic Chinese food the likes of which we just don't have anywhere in Europe."

ESTER

"Like Relæ in Copenhagen or Estela in New York, this is one of those modern restaurants that's really nailing casual dining right now. The cooking is always spot-on, reliably seasonal, and there's always lots to choose from—a sure bet."

PORTEÑO

"This one goes close to the heart of Australians. Everywhere you travel around the country, they'll tell you they have the best beef or the best lamb—and here you can have that wonderful meat cooked over the fire. Porteño's inflection might run a bit more South American or European, but at its heart, this is like being at a super-fun Aussie barbecue."

EDITION COFFEE ROASTERS

"It doesn't really matter if you're here or in Brisbane or Darwin or anywhere else—Australia's most 'alive' food culture is in its cafés, which are unique in the world. Wherever you go, you can always find friendly people serving greatquality food and coffee. For me, Edition is the best café in Sydney."

The NEW CLASSICS

Couldn't score a table at the Noma pop-up? Three other fine-dining entrants have been generating similar buzz-particularly chef Peter Gilmore's relaunch of Bennelong, which occupies a soaring, elegant space inside the Sydney Opera House, Dishes like a whole head of John Dory smeared in umami butter—served with Tokyo turnips and the curious desert plant saltbush-offer a nuanced mix of indigenous and immigrant flavors. Around the bay, near Darling Harbour, Martin Benn and Vicky Wild's Sepia pairs flawless service with a fresh and novel take on Japanese-Aussie fusion. (In Australia, fusion was never a four-letter word.) And after a quarter of a century, Neil Perry's pioneering Rockpool relocated to the magnificent colonial-era Burns Philp Building downtown, with its Mod Oz spirit and mad soul intact.

Finally, Sydney Gets a CHIC HOTEL. (Make That Two)

In 2015, a pair of world-beating properties turned the Harbour City's hotel scene on its head—and put their neighborhoods squarely on the style set's radar.

THE OLD CLARE

The Hood For over a century, Chippendale was known as a half-square-mile nexus of iniquity. Today, its late-Victorian terraces are filling up with makers, bakers, artists, and chefs, while Kensington Street is being reinvented as a "lifestyle" laneway à la Melbourne's. The Heritage The hotel occupies two landmark buildings: the former Clare Hotel Pub (Functionalist style circa 1940) and Carlton & United Breweries HQ (late Oz-Victorian circa 1915); the former's bar was an infamous boozer in Chippendale's seedier days. The Look Wall tiles, parquet floors, and the original moldings and beams were all meticulously underrestored by local architects Tonkin Zulaikha Greer. Mid-century chairs from owner Loh Lik Peng's personal collection are found in nearly all 62 guest rooms. The Food The Old Clare's trifecta of restaurants— Jason Atherton's Kensington Street Social, Silvereye (from ex-Noma sous chef Sam Miller), and Automata (from Momofuku Seiobo vet Clavton Wells)-have raised Chippendale's profile as much as the hotel has.

HOTEL PALISADE

The Hood Miller's Point, an inner-city suburb between The Rocks and the newly developed Barangaroo Reserve, had been a scrappy longshoremen's enclave, albeit characterized by seriously pretty Federation Filigree architecture; it's now decidedly on the upswing. The Heritage Built in 1912, the five-story Palisade Pub is another glorious relic of old Sydney, where, during World War I, Anzac soldiers shipping out to Gallipoli from Sydney Harbour came to sink their final pints. The Look Über-stylist Sibella Court (see page 98) was conscripted to renovate the pub and repurpose its utilitarian upper floors into nine unique guest suites, two private lounges, and a knockout rooftop bar. Think Soho House on an Olde Good Things budget, filtered through a sepia lens.

The Food Chef David O'Brien's simple-yet-stellar menu—steak sandwiches, house-made salt-and-vine-gar chips, and all the trad pub dishes you crave—keeps The Palisade's spirit alive, while famed mixologist Mikey Enright's cocktails are fully of-the-moment.



SUNNY Side Up Chef Bill Granger

and the cult of the Aussie café

Twenty-three years ago, a college dropout named Bill Granger opened a cheery, no-frills breakfast joint in central Sydney named, simply, **Bills.** From a tiny kitchen, the chefturned out dishes

that were straightforward, fresh, occasionally indulgent, and just plain delicious: avocado toast, ethereal scrambled eggs, ricotta hotcakes with strawberries and buttery streaks of honeycomb. Such defiantly unpretentious food made Bills feel like an extension of home—and launched a whole new culture of eating in Australia. Thanks to Granger, the café came to rival the pub as Sydney's beloved "local," and his uniquely Aussie take on informal dining has been oft-imitated and exported around the globe. Today, the maestro has outposts in London, Tokyo, Seoul, and Honolulu, plus another two in Sydney, including a fab new location in Bondi.

As ever, the lines run down the block—so if you can't snag a table, check out one of these Granger-inspired cafés around town.

GET YOUR BREKKIE HERE

Bread & Circus, Alexandria, for lemony banana pancakes and a

flat white.

Mecca, Alexandria, for poached eggs and farm-raised ham with red-thyme ricotta. Room 10, Potts Point, for the brown rice breakfast bowl.

Ruby's Diner,
Queen's Park,
for slow-cooked porridge with baked quince, pistachio crumble, and buttermilk.

The raw breakfast salad at Ruby's Diner: kale, avocado, feta, broccoli, almonds, and poached eggs.



A sunrise swim—a daily ritual for so many Sydneysiders—at the 69-year-old Ross Jones Memorial Pool, one of the city's beloved saltwater rock pools.



"We weren't TRULY HOME till we dipped our feet in that water..."

Novelist **Anna Funder** on the nostalgic allure of Sydney's iconic rock pools.

Apart from certain living creatures (aged 13, 11, and 6), the rock pools of Sydney are my favorite things on the planet. As with all great loves, there's something primal and irrational about it. Visiting once from New York, I returned to Wylie's Baths, an oceanside pool seemingly carved by surf from the rock below, and was so overcome by its beauty that I kept snapping photos with my phone.

"You're not from here?" a stranger asked.

"I am," I replied. "And I still can't believe it."

After years of living away, we moved back. The first thing we did was take our made-in-Brooklyn children to Murray Rose Pool and throw them in, rechristening them as Australians. We weren't truly home till we dipped our feet in that crystalline water at the edge of the continent and felt the sky rise to its rightful place, way higher than in the Northern Hemisphere. It wasn't just any water we needed: It had to be a Sydney rock pool, a holy place of worship for what's essentially an Australian religion.

You reach Murray Rose through a library, of all things, then via a sunken garden, under majestic Moreton Bay fig trees. The swimming area is enclosed by a pier/walkway, beyond which pleasure boats bob and the ferries to Manly cruise by. At one end is a cyclone fence with a gate marked PRIVATE, curtailing access to Seven Shillings Beach, a millionaires' row. But the gate is never, ever closed, and everyone happily ignores the sign.

The rock pools are a juncture of everyday pleasures and unexpected miracles. At Bondi one weekend, a group clustered at pool's edge, where a man held in his hands a small horn shark. She'd given birth there and was banging against the rocks; he held her gently underwater until the waves rose high enough for her to swim out.

We've since given in completely and enrolled the children at Nippers, the surf lifesaving club at Bronte. Sundays are now spent with other parent volunteers, cheering our children through laps. As the surf crashes into the pool and our six-year-old comes up for air, I realize what is happening here. The kids are learning a lesson as basic as the gospel: To be your best is to be able to look out for others. Then it strikes me what this pool really is—one of the few instances where something man-made dares to improve on nature, and in doing so honors it. Where something free and open to all still feels precious and rare. Holy and secular. Secret, but the most democratic thing in the world. Lifesaving.

The TASTEMAKERS' Black Book

Sydney's agenda-defining restaurant and design scenes are now celebrated around the globe, thanks to the likes of these innovative style-setters—all four at the top of their game. Here, they share their favorite hometown haunts.



MAURICE TERZINI

The Italian-Australian restaurateur is the creative force behind the legendary Icebergs Dining Room and Bar, the Bondi Beach go-to since 2002.

"My dear friends Gio and Enrico Paradiso and Marco Ambrosino opened up **Fratelli Paradiso** 15 years ago in now-chic Potts Point. (It sure wasn't back then.) Fratelli has a great Italian vibe, with all-day dining, excellent coffee and pastries, and a very fine wine selection."



JUSTIN HEMMES

Through his ever-expanding Merivale hospitality brand, the raffish impresario oversees some 60 nightclubs, restaurants, and hotels across Sydney.

"In Paddington, the small, candlelit bar **10 William Street** is consistently jam-packed, for good reason: The waitstaff are fantastic, the food is spot-on and completely free of pretension, the wine list is an interesting mix of well-known and unusual varietals ... and they do a mean Negroni."



SIBELLA COURT

The interior designer's unique brand of eclectic chic is on display all over town, from the new Hotel Palisade (page 95) to her own fabulous home store, The Society Inc.

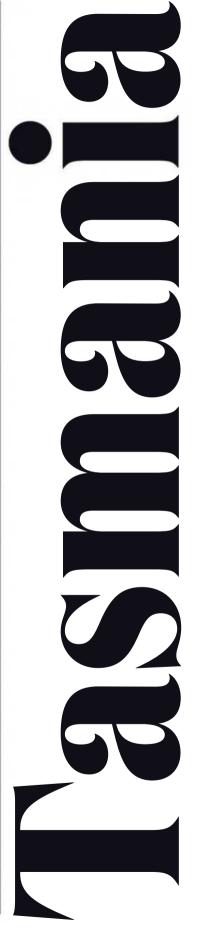
"The talented textile artisans Pepa Martin and Karen Davis hand-dye all the cushions, curtains, and rugs at their decade-old studio and gallery, **Shibori,** and they can custom-design *anything*. I've called on them for so many projects, including the DJ box and blue-striped curtains at Palisade."



MEGAN MORTON

A dedicated booster of Australia's homegrown artisans, the interiors stylist recently launched The School, a crafts-focused teaching studio in the inner-city area of Rosebery.

"The furniture and design firm **Koskela** launched its concept store here in industrial Rosebery in 2012. I love browsing the light-flooded showroom for salvaged hardwood picnic tables and items from local artists, like woven pendant lights fashioned by our indigenous Yolgnu community."









The LITTLE ISLAND That Could

It's the ultra-antipodean bit of the antipodes, the unlikely outlier that, in recent years, began punching above its weight on the food and culture fronts. There are myriad reasons to visit Tasmania: the nascent dining scene in Hobart, the island's capital (home to the rightly lauded restaurant Franklin); the weirdly wonderful Museum of Old and New Art (the largest privately funded museum in Australia); the homegrown ciders and whiskeys that are now the stuff of lore, and the cool-climate wines—savory pinots, crisp sauvignons—that have quietly gained cult status. But the real star is Tasmania's landscape: magnificently varied, sparsely populated, replete with protected tracts of mountain wilderness and pristine coastline. Now, two hotels are leveraging the island's natural beauty with strikingly original takes on design.

PUMPHOUSE POINT

Set within Lake St. Clair National Park—a World Heritage wilderness in the Central Highlands—this extraordinary retreat is the labor of love of Simon Currant, who's cast his hotel as a model for sustainability and environmental awareness. Its 18 rooms and suites are divided between two buildings: the Art Deco-inspired Shorehouse and the curious circa-1940 Pumphouse, formerly a hydroelectric plant. (Angle for a room in the latter, set in the heart of the lake, at the end of a 700-foot-long flume jetty.) The aesthetic is understated industrial-chic: Task lamps and large wooden tables mix with built-ins of warm Tasmanian oak. Nearly every room has a picture window with views of glacial mountains or the indigo-blue lake itself.



SATELLITE ISLAND

In late 2013, the Alstergren family opened their remarkable 76-acre salmon farm for overnight stays. Thirty miles south of Hobartaccessed by helicopter or private speedboat— Satellite Island was used by eighteenth-century French explorers for astronomical observations; the island remains a dream of rocky coastal paths and still coves. with a three-bedroom "summer house" atop a hill and a two-bedroom boathouse tucked below. Interiors are flawless seaside-country-coir

mats and heavy, nubby linens in grays, blues, and naturals; a boathouse lamp upcycled from driftwood. Take a morning hike on a mile-long track to Last Glimpse Point with a thermos of coffee and fresh-baked pastries; come sunset, shuck your own oysters from the shallows in front of the boathouse. The quiet, you'll realize, is astonishing, and reason alone to have come.

Where ALICE WATERS Learned to Cook (Again)

How the Bay Area icon left her heart in Tasmania.

For each of the 44 years I've had Chez Panisse, I've traveled for inspiration, and I admit it took me some time to make it to Australia. When I finally did arrive, in 2014, I encountered such beautifully pure ingredients and cooks of such great integrity that I wish I'd gone sooner-this is truly one of the great gastronomic destinations. But it's the Agrarian Kitchen, 45 minutes outside Hobart, that will stay with me forever-my dream cooking school made real, run by a former chef turned magazine editor turned farmer named Rodney Dunn. The setting

lives up to the name: a beautiful old schoolhouse on a working farm with mulberry trees and boysenberries and rare-breed Berkshire pigs. Rodney's classes are as much a celebration of Tasmania's abundance and agricultural traditions as they are lessons in the fundamentals of great cooking. I still dream about his take on bacon and eggs-a glazed and roasted suckling pig with par-boiled eggs from the farm's hens. And Rodney is that rare combination of a deeply talented cook and a generous teacher. He and his wife, Séverine, made me feel so at home that I never wanted to leave." -A.W.













Second City ASCENDANT

Innovative chefs, designsavvy restaurateurs—and, oh yes, that legendary coffee.

Take our word for it-or just take Heston Blumenthal's. "Melbourne has, without a doubt, one of the world's most exciting restaurant scenes," says the British chef, who recently opened his first venture outside the U.K. here (an outpost of his smash London restaurant, Dinner). And while its profile has risen among food-world cognoscenti-thanks to local heroes like Attica's Ben Shewry-Melbourne has been, for some time, a phenomenal place to eat. The city has long drawn a broad mix of immigrant cultures, with every community bringing its culinary A-game. Isolation forced each to bend and borrow from neighbors; techniques and traditions integrated by necessity as much as by choice. This bowerbird approach evolved unself-consciously, forged not in the fusion experiments of high-end restaurants but in the quotidian eating habits of openminded Melbournians. (For proof, look to the historic Queen Victoria Market, where tatsoi, Thai chilies, za'atar, and pomegranate molasses have been sold under one roof for decades-long before they became fashionable in New York, L.A., and London.) Today, a typical Melbourne line cook might be a third-generation Greek who is trained in Cantonese technique, has staged in kitchens in Denmark and Spain, and dreams of opening a native-ingredient-driven pho joint. Relaxed sophistication defines the dining scene-which owes an equal debt to the design community, whose collaboration with restaurateurs is another Melbourne hallmark. Here it's not enough to recycle furniture, dim the lights, and pump in the beats: In Australia's most progressive city, thoughtful and elegant spaces are a common priority, manifested in the clever utility of a tiny laneway café, a gorgeously reinvented pub, and the high design of a fine-dining destination. Whichever setting you choose, Blumenthal's point is spot-on: This is one hell of a food town.

Melbourne's ESSENTIAL Restaurants

THE GAME CHANGER

Don't let the deep-suburbia location fool vou: Attica is one of Australia's finest restaurants, and certainly its most directional, with chefowner Ben Shewry emerging as the standard-bearer for a new national cuisine. Celebrating once-shunned native ingredients, he's introduced a bold and novel flavor profile with showmanship but not a trace of gimmickry. The ever-changing menu might include a tail of marron (similar to freshwater lobster) and hunks of pearl meat paired with lilly pilly (a tangy crimson fruit); a delicate King George whiting wrapped in paper bark; or an astonishing cured red kangaroo with purple carrots and shaved bunya-bunya nut purée, its vermilion palette evoking the terrain of central Australia

THE BRILLIANT OUTLIER

Chef Dan Hunter made his bones cooking in rural, not urban, restaurants—first at Spain's Mugaritz and then at western Victoria's Royal Mail Hotel. So when he opened Brae in 2013, it made a certain sense that he chose a colonial-era cottage on 30 acres 90 minutes southwest of Melbourne. The setting might suggest nostalgic "paddock-to-plate" fare, but Hunter's next-gen techniques and intricate presentations offer a radical evolution of the locavore ethos. A recent ten-course tasting culminated in an eminently craveable braised short rib, scattered with shiitakes, baby kaffir lime leaves, and rock samphire. And a dessert of appleand-parsnip custardhoused within the crisp. golden skin of a whole parsnip-was at once earthy and innovative, much like Brae itself.

THE REBORN RELIC

Until recently, the Builders Arms Hotel was a classic rough-and-tumble Aussie boozer. Then Andrew McConnell took over, and a notorious dive pub somehow metamorphosed into a bastion of good taste. Just the miracle we expect of McConnell, who's spent his career changing the way Melbourne eats and drinksfrom the refined Cutler and Co. to his packed pan-Asian Supernormal, But Moon Under Water, at the new Builders Arms, may well be his masterpiece. With white wood cabinetry and Thonet chairs, the dining room makes a fitting stage for food that's both honest and beautifully executed. A recent starter of delicate, barely adorned raw scallops segued into Parmesan-Gruyère puffs filled with spanner crabmeat. And a roasted veal with sunchokes was made modern by a deeply nuanced, shockingly good coffee rub.

THE SHINING PEARL

Unlike fickle Sydney, Melbourne is a city that values its institutions. Decadesold stalwarts—when they're good-are still relevant in the dining scene. Prime example: Flower Drum, tucked above the fray of Chinatown and now entering its fifth decade. Combining the lacquer-and-red-carpet glamour of a Hong Kong dim sum palace with the refinement of a Michelin three-star, this would be one of the finest Cantonese restaurants anywhere if its style weren't more aptly called "Canto-stralian." Here, what appears to be a typical double-boiled soup is made with wallaby tail, to deliriously rich effect. Dumplings are stuffed with the sweet, delicate flesh of Queensland mud crabs. And the traditional abalone has been replaced with native Australian pearl meat. sautéed with asparagus and chives and served in its lustrous shell.

FIVE VICTORIA WINES TO GET BUZZED ON

2013 Crawford River Estate Riesling

2014 Moon Marsanne

2014 Patrick Sullivan Fruits of the Sky Pinot Noir

2012 Cobaw Ridge Chardonnay

2014 Latta Malakoff Young Skin No. 1 Non Dos (Zero SO2) Nebbiolo



About That COFFEE

Melbourne's culinary renaissance began in the same way almost every Australian now starts the day: with great coffee. In the 1950s, the first Italian immigrants opened espresso bars, introducing not only a new style of beverage but a profound cultural shift-and kick-starting the city's transformation from a tea-sipping Anglo outpost to the cosmopolitan, coffee-obsessed town it is now. The spiritual home of Melbourne's coffee culture-and by extension the entire country's—is **Pellegrini's**, a time warp of red vinyl and ristretto, where, so the story goes, Melbourne's first espresso machine was installed in 1954; today, its seminal status makes it a sentimental choice. ¶ And the newer breed? Melbourne never needed a so-called third wave of coffee (it was already doing quite well, thanks), so next-gen coffee bars here transcend mere hipsterdom. Instead, at cafés like Seven Seeds, you'll find an easy, eclectic mix of all ages and types. What sets the current scene apart is not the quality of the beans or superior roasting skills but the baristas' mastery of milk. Perfectly tempered, mixed to the proper ratio, the typical Melbournian flat white, latte, and cappuccino deliver an optimal mix of crema and creaminess, exemplified by those at the terrific standing-roomonly café Patricia. And while café-goers once came for the coffee, now they stay for the food, not least the ubiquitous avocado toast-prepared with particular flair at Pope Joan in Brunswick East.

Above: An Americano at Patricia in Melbourne. Right: Peking duck in handmade pancakes with cucumber, spring onions, and plum sauce at the 40-year-old Cantonese institution Flower Drum.



The BOHEMIA **Beyond the Beach**

Known for its spectacular headland and near-perfect waves, the slightly shabby subtropical beach town of Byron Bay, 480 miles north of Sydney, has for decades lured surfers and backpackers seeking a louche seaside getaway. Lately, a cohort of hoteliers and chefs have balanced that laid-back beachy goodness with a dose of sophistication, opening new ventures-both along the shore and in Byron Shire's lush hinterlands-that are drawing attention off the waves. Take the lads from Sydney's Three Blue Ducks, who've brought their winning brand of low-key locavore dining north with The Farm, an 80-acre working ranch and restaurant where the food travels the shortest possible distance from field to fork. Like a lot of things in Byron Shire, it's quirky, smart, and unerringly cool. Here, a few other bright spots in one of our favorite parts of the country.

Clockwise from ephemera in a Bay; the hotel's Airstream trailer suite; coconut scrambled eggs and spelt toast with avocado at Folk; a view of The Farm's pecan orchard.

top left: Maritime guest room at The Atlantic in Byron

FLEET

The town of Brunswick Heads (population: 1,636) has all the Byron requisites: beach, pub, fish-and-chips shop. Now it also has Australia's best new regional restaurant. This tiny 20-seater, opened last year, is a two-person operation run by host/ server/sommelier Astrid Mc-Cormack and her partner, chef Josh Lewis. Economy leads to brilliance in the kitchen: Oft-maligned mullet is smoked and transformed into a dip laced with dill, accompanied by crisps of potato and fish skin. Like Brunswick Heads itself, it's an unassuming revelation.

HALCYON HOUSE

Half an hour north of Byron, on Cabarita Beach, this breezy 21-room sleepaway is where seaside nostalgia meets Oz's trademark unfussy-chic, with bamboo fixtures, upholstered walls, and a Capri-esque palette of blue and white against a backdrop of powdery sands and the endless Pacific. Chef Ben Devlin-holy smokes, another Noma alum!-leads the restaurant with modest but inventive flair. And thoughtful details, like a scoop of passion fruit ice cream at check-in. make Halcyon feel like a return to childhood shoreside holidays.

MIDDLE PUB

For all its newly scrubbedup appeal, Byron still revels in that rugged Aussie spirit embodied by the old-school pub-which is why we'd be remiss not to mention our favorite local. A short drive north of the bay, in Mullumbimby (try saying that after a few pints), this tin-andtimber watering hole has a veranda that's provided refuge from the afternoon sun for more than a century. Grab a coldie, then settle in for a session by the faithful piano, still plink-plinking after all these years.

FOLK

It's a café. In a trailer park. From that dubious premise, Folk turns out to be a most charming surprise: a weatherboard cottage where the cheery. tousle-haired staff do a healthy breakfast-lingeringinto-lunch trade. Sure, the nasturtiums adorning those (emphatically Aussie) grain bowls are as much about peace and love as they are about flavor, but Folk is dead-serious when it comes to good food-and the saltwaterand-sun-kissed vibe is a major plus.

THE ATLANTIC

Ex-Sydneysiders Kim Amos and Steve Eakin took over a collection of bayside cottages, spruced them up with whitewash and 1960s surf kitsch, and launched their boutique hotel in 2012, filling the niche for a stylish weekender option beyond Byron's long-term rentals and backpacker dives. They've won devoted fans from Sydney, Brisbane, and Melbourne, and established the Atlantic as a sort of antipodean answer to Ace Hotels.















Where To Go NEXT

If you have more than two weeks, consider one of these farther-flung emerging destinations. Or start planning your return, then hit every last one. (Trust us: They're worth the journey.)

ADELAIDE: THE NEW WINE COUNTRY

Some of the oldest producing vineyards in the world can be found around the southern coastal city of Adelaide, which was spared the late-nineteenth-century phylloxera outbreak that devastated most of Australia's old-growth vines. Today, the Adelaide Hills, and the Basket Range in particular, are capturing global attention for first-rate natural wines. The area has attracted top vinicultural talent, including James Erskine, a former Gourmet Traveller Sommelier of the Year, who's making an inventive, on-the-nose grenache at his acclaimed Jauma vineyard.

PERTH: THE FRONTIER **TOWN MADE CHIC**

It's called the most isolated city on earth, but Western Australia's capital is now basking in the glow of major investment, ambitious development, and some glossy high-profile openings. Leading the charge is COMO The Treasury, the COMO brand's first Aussie outpost, which debuted in October in a clutch of Victorianera buildings. Nearby, Thai cooking maestro David Thompson's monthold Long Chim is already the hottest table in town, while fresh-shucked oysters and Margaret River chardonnays are luring the in-crowd to Print Hall. And Cottesloe Beachperhaps the country's finest stretch of sand—is just eight miles away.

CANBERRA: CAPITAL OF COOL

Australia's formerly humdrum capital is having an unlikely but undeniable moment, courtesy of its rich culture scene (don't miss Tom Roberts at the National Gallery through Easter) and a re-appreciation of Canberra's epic master-plan architecture. But it's the 68-room Hotel Hotel that's become a destination in itself. The entrance alone—a grand staircase with 2,250 pieces of sleek salvaged timber-proclaims it to be more bold than beige. The drama continues in a lobby of untreated concrete, punctured with round skylights and softened with supple leather loungers, shaggy stools, and bespoke artwork. This is Australia's most accomplished and eye-popping hotel, bar none.

... AND THE LODGES WE DREAM ABOUT

For two decades, Australia's trans-Tasman neighbor, New Zealand, has dominated the highest end of the region's resort market, thanks to a clever coalition of its ultra-luxurious wilderness lodges. • Emulating the Kiwi model, Luxury Lodges of Australia (LLoA) was formed in 2010-an exclusive collection drawing together 19 independent properties from all corners of the country. Want to explore the Outback? Spend three days in the wild isolation of Western Australia's Kimberley region at EI Questro Homestead—or wake up to the staggering beauty of Uluru (Ayers Rock) at the newly renovated Longitude 131°. Diving the Great Barrier Reef? Beach yourself at Queensland's award-winning Qualia, or hit Lizard Island for superlative snorkeling. You can spend a few nights tasting Barossa Valley wines at **The** Louise; soaking up mineral springs at Victoria's Lake House spa retreat; or taking in the windswept drama of Kangaroo Island's Southern Ocean Lodge. LLoA can suggest a multistop itinerary for seamless travel between camps and lodges. As your hosts say, No worries.



FIVE **AUSSIE BEACHES** TO WASH UP ON

Wategos Beach Byron Bay

Cottesloe Beach Western Australia

Bondi Beach Sydney

Bells Beach Victoria

Whitehaven Beach Whitsunday Island

From Sydney's vibrant cocktail scene to thrilling new adventures in the Outback, explore everything the country has to offer at cntraveler .com/australia.

Your CULTURE FIX

2016 highlights from around the country.

Bangarra Dance Theatre

Sydney; year-round The renowned Indigenous Australian company (above) spins a uniquely modernoften powerfully politicaltake on traditional dance.

MONA FOMA

Hobart; January 13-18 Tasmania's Museum of Old and New Art hosts the hizarre-yet-brilliant Festival of Music and Art; the Flaming Lips top this year's lineup.

Asia Pacific Triennial of **Contemporary Art**

Brisbane; through April Co-sponsored by GOMA, Australia's leading modern art museum, this year's exhibition focuses on figurative painting, kinetic art and sculpture, and live-action and video art from luminaries around the region.

Festival of Dangerous Ideas Sydney; September Held at the Opera House, the annual conclave gathers global provocateurs for a series of headline-grabbing talks and panels.

GET HERE NOW: AUSTRALIA EXPECTS NEARLY 8 MILLION VISITORS IN 2016-A 35 PERCENT INCREASE FROM JUST 5 YEARS AGO.



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2016 **GOLD LIST**

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THE ROYAL HAWAIIAN

The famed "Pink Palace of the Pacific" redefines luxury as it welcomes esteemed guests to the reimagined Mailani Tower. royal-hawaiian.com



THE ROYAL HAWAIIAN Walter



BADRUTT'S PALACE ST. MORITZ, SWITZERLAND

Badrutt's Palace is a 5-star luxury castle, located in glamorous St. Montz. and offering 157 rooms including 37 suites, badruttspalace.com





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HOTEL ÄNDRA, SEATTLE

Ideally located in the heart of downtown Seattle, Hotel Andra offers a stylish location with fourstar service, hotelandra.com

HOTELÄNDRA



THE LANGHAM, LONDON

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THE LANGHAM



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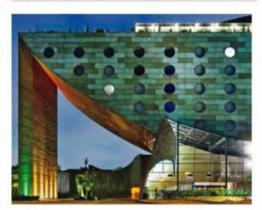




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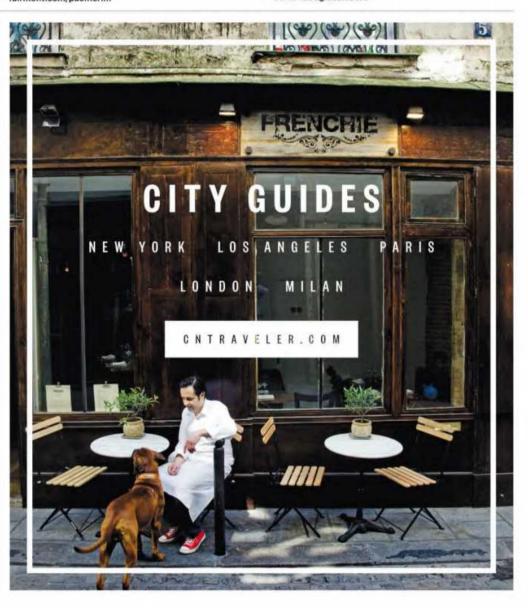




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TRAVEL NEE

Tips, tricks, and miscellany: Our editors' guide to navigating the world.

GOOD NEWS

On some Virgin America flights through March 2, you can listen to Spotify's entire catalog. The airline will also offer passengers a free 30day digital subscription to the New York Times that can be used in the air and on the ground.

UNBELIEVABLE NEWS

Oops! Elite members of the InterContinental Hotels Group found themselves calling "America's hottest" phone sex line when the company misprinted the customer care number on its new membership cards.

BAD NEWS

This month, admission prices to Greece's museums and archaeological sites will, in some cases, increase by as much as 150 percent. Entry to the Acropolis jumps from \$13 to \$21; the ruins of Knossos, in Crete, from \$6 to \$16.



Ipanema Beach in Rio de Janeiro.

WE ASKED OUR TRAVEL SPECIALISTS

What are your travel predictions for 2016?

"Because of the recent peace deal between the government and left-wing guerrillas, travel to Colombia will steadily pick up." -Tyler Dillon,

Butterfield & Robinson

"Higher global temperatures mean we'll have longer travel seasons in England, Ireland, and Scotland."

-Jonathan Epstein, Celebrated Experiences "The Belmond Orcaella, Sanctuary Ananda, and Aqua Mekong will continue to set the luxury bar for river cruises." -Richard Bruce Turen.

Churchill & Turen

"More multigenerational tripspaid for entirely by the grandparents." -Trevor Thomas, Southern Crossings

"Travelers will tack on trips to other South American countries like Chile and Peru, especially if they're seeking adventure travel after the Olympics." -Sylvia Delvaille Jones, Villas and Apartments Abroad

"GoPros and drones on safari!" -Ryan Hilton, AuthentEscapes



64,000 Miles Logged Last Year

Jill Kluge, Mandarin Oriental's London-based group director of brand communications, on her pre-departure meal and the app that saves her from getting soaked on a rainy day.

On long-haul flights, I'VE ALWAYS GOT TWO BOOKS AND AN IPAD LOADED WITH THE TIMES AND THE ECONOMIST. I DREAD THE DAY WHEN MOBILE CONNECTION WORKS ON INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS. The best business-class cabin is BRITISH AIRWAYS ON THE NEW A3905. It'S A DOUBLE-DECKER, SO IT'S MUCH QUIETER -AND THE WINDOW SEAT COMPARTMENTS HAVE A TON OF SPACE. My favorite airport is HEATHROW. I'LL SIT AND HAVE SMOKED SALMON WITH A GLASS OF CRISP CHILLED WINE AT THE CAVIAR HOUSE & PRUNIER SEAFOOD BAR. My go-to app on the road is UBER. IT'S SAVED MY LIFE ON RAINY DAYS IN NEW YORK AND HONG KONG. AND HOW ON EARTH DID WE EVEK SURVIVE WITHOUT GOOGLE MAPS? I always pack WORKOUT CLOTHES, A SWIMSUIT, AND REALLY FINE CALHMERE WRAPS. My signature room-service order is WONTON NOODLE SOUP. Before I check out of my hotel, I always OPEN THE SAFE TO MAKE SURE I HAVEN'T LEFT MY PASSPORT

21.4%

The increase in passenger traffic to Doha's Hamad International Airport in the last year. Abu Dhabi International saw an increase of 18.2 percent. Middle East airports reported the greatest rise worldwide, according to a study by Airports Council International.

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Plus, all stays include daily spa treatments in influenced Wellness Centre, which includes the brand new medical BodyScience Clinic.





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San Francisco's Chinese Mega-Market

San Fran entrepreneur George Chen, known for his celebrated restaurant Shanghai 1930 and his James Beard-nominated Betelnut, opens gourmet emporium **China Live** (below) in Chinatown this spring. Of its 1,500-plus products, he recommends the four you need to cook great Chinese food at home.



DRIED SHIITAKE MUSHROOMS

"More intense than the fresh variety, they add a savory kick to braised pork shoulder and stews."

CHINGKIANG

"This essential black rice vinegar is like Chinese balsamic and jazzes up chicken salads or noodles."

RED SICHUAN CHILIES

"When added to stir-fries in a very hot wok, these spicy peppers get extra fragrant."

OLIVE LEAF

"Pickled olive leaves pack a savorysweet punch in tomato sauce and stews."

WOULD YOU EVER...



...wear a **Batband** (\$199)? The headphone alternative transmits sound via bone conduction—subtle vibrations on your temples—so you're not entirely sealed off from the world. The Kickstarter campaign has raised more than \$820,000 to date (preorder at studio bananathings.com).

THE RANT

Millennials to Hotels: Stop Trying So Hard!

Marriott president and CEO Arne Sorenson was born in 1959. His boss, Bill Marriott, turned 83 in March. Hotel revolutionary Ian Schrager celebrates his seventieth this summer. These guys aren't spring chickens by any means (sorry, gentlemen!), but that hasn't stopped them from trying to lure 18- to 32-year-olds into staying in their hotels with the record players and street art they think every Millennial loves.

Example? InterContinental Hotels Group's new Even brand offers kale salads and LED mood lighting next to every bed. And at Hyatt Centric-a brand that sounds like it was born out of a focus group-guests don't enter the lobby, they walk into an "open-concept lounge where your experience begins." Every property has a "health studio" (a gym), "creative meeting spaces" (conference rooms), and a "barman's table" (yep, just a bar).

As a Millennial, I'm here to say you don't have to woo us with your in-room acoustic guitars. Yes, the Freehand Chicago has cute Crosley radios in its rooms, but I was more excited by the bedside outlet where I could charge my phone while it rested on the nightstand. It turns out we're not that different from our parents. Just don't skimp on the free Wi-Fi. -PAUL BRADY

OMBUDSMAN

Winter Weather Advisory

As part of a round-the-world itinerary, I planned to fly from Washington, D.C., to New York, but United canceled the flight because of bad weather. They offered to rebook me—on a departure leaving two days later. Instead, I canceled and drove to New York. I know airlines aren't obligated to pay for weather-related delays, but shouldn't I get something for a flight I never took? –James G., Oamaru, New Zealand

Had you taken the rebooking, you'd have had to settle for no money back, since United would've eventually flown you to New York. But the airline's website says you may receive a credit or refund for the unused portion of a trip, should you choose to cancel as the result of a weather delay of two-plus hours. (Many airlines now waive fees for cancellation in advance of major storms, a great benefit for travelers whose plans allow flexibility.) After we tracked them down, United did as they should and sent our reader James \$80, the full price of his one-way D.C.-New York flight.

Need help solving a travel problem? Ombudsman offers advice and mediation: E-mail ombudsman@cntraveler.com.

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EVEN THOUGH it looks like it could open an iron-barred castle, this is actually a corkscrew in the form of a skeleton key (known to locksmiths as a lever lock key). These corkscrews were not uncommon items nearly a century ago, especially in Germany, and collectors today are quite fond of them. Some were "aged" with a verdigris finish. The nicer ones, called Bremen keys, were silver-plated, with that city's coat of arms forming the handle. These were sold as souvenirs, as this one likely was—it's almost like a postcard, engraved with the message "Greetings from the Rhine, Lotti," only highly utilitarian. We'll never know if *Lotti* refers to a region or a person, but we'd like to think that whoever was the recipient of this faux key used it to enjoy a nice Riesling. Or a Pilsner: The looped handle on this one doubles as a bottle opener. -CHRISTOPHER BONANOS





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